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PHILISTINISM

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PLAIN WORDS CONCERNING CERTAIN FORMS
OF MODERN SCEPTICISM

BY

R. HEBER NEWTON

RECTOR OF ALL SOULS' PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY

NEW YORK & LONDON
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

The Knickerbocker Press

1886

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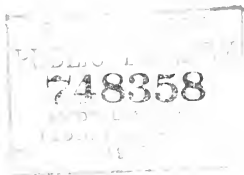
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"These (the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian) and other Creeds which might be mentioned, are all of human fabrication. They oblige conscience as far as they are conformable to Scripture, and of that conformity every man must judge for himself. * * * This liberty of private judgment is recognized by our church (*notwithstanding subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles*) when, in the Service of the Ordering of Priests, it proposes this question—"Are you determined, out of the said Scriptures, to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which YOU SHALL BE PERSUADED may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures?"—Bishop Watson: "Life": I; pp. 395-397.

"We should like to see the man who for such contradictions as these will venture to call his brother to account. Let him who agrees with every word and statement of the Formularies cast the first stone at these variations. All clergymen, of whatever school, who have the slightest knowledge of their own opinions and of the letter of the Prayer Book and Articles, must go out one by one, beginning at the Archbishop of Canterbury in his palace at Lambeth, even down to the meanest curate in the wilds of Cumberland."—Stanley; "Essays on Church and State"; p. 89.

"If the Catholic Church is to retain its hold upon the hearts and lives of men, this must be by loyalty to that ideal of its work and character which we find in the Holy Scriptures. What is this ideal? It is that of a spiritual society, united by spiritual bonds, and existing for the great spiritual end of making earth more like heaven, and men more like their Lord. It is that of a *brotherhood of manifold diversities* * * * absorbing into itself all that is great, noble and true of all ages and countries, the soul of each member being the habitation of the Most High, and his body a temple of the Holy Ghost."—Archbishop of Canterbury (Tait): "Letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople"

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PREFACE.

THE sermons comprising this series were preached in All Souls' Church, on successive Sunday mornings in the opening of the present year. They were called forth by the repetition in our city, during the winter, of certain onslaughts upon Christianity which are notorious for their telling expression of the crude and coarse scepticism which many circumstances combine to make popular at present, and which are thus given an undue influence over young men, who are most affected by the spirit of the age. My aim in this course was, without entering into controversy with any one on special points, to go over the grounds along which the more sweeping attacks are being made against religion; in order to indicate, to those who might follow me, the actual situation, and to aid my hearers in discriminating between the indefensible positions which a reverent reason may call upon us to abandon and the true strategic lines which are not even uncovered by the forces of a raw rationalism. I proposed, therefore, after an introductory sermon, to speak successively of some of the objections which are raised against Institutional Christianity, against Dogmatic Theology, and against the Essential Christian Faiths. The second of these sections covered three sermons, and the third section reached through the last half of the course.

In addition to the special uses made of various books, which have been duly credited at the proper places in foot-notes, I must acknowledge my indebtedness for very much of the material used in the second sermon to that admirable work of Mr. Charles L. Brace, "Gesta Christi"; and for suggestions embodied in the ninth and tenth sermons to the noble discourses of Theodore Parker on the subject therein treated. In the second sermon I have taken a few allowable liberties with chronology, in order to fill in the picture more effectively.

It had not been my intention to publish these sermons in book form, but this course has been once more forced upon me by the misrepresentations to which some of them have been subjected, and by the strictures that they have called down upon me. Conscious of an earnestly constructive aim in these discourses—an aim which I am sure any candid reader will readily recognize—I was wholly unprepared, even after the experience of the two previous years, for the renewed outcry that was raised against me, and for the precipitate judgment that was passed on me from the necessarily imperfect reports of my words in the daily press. Through this clamor, my course of sermons was continued as originally planned, and now that it has been completed I submit it to the calmer judgment of those who may care to read the book. Because of this reason for the issue of the volume, its contents are presented without the changes which would otherwise have been made, in revising discourses that were prepared for speaking in order to lay them before the reader. The head and front of my offending has nowhere been covered over but can be seen now in whatever native ugliness it originally had. The only change of any importance occurs in the argument for the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels, contained in the first sermon; which, not having called forth any adverse criticisms, I have felt free to amplify from my imperfect notes.

The only surprise, I fancy, that the candid reader will experience in these plain sermons will lie in the difficulty of finding anything in them that could have caused a disturbance. The very words which caused such offence, when read apart from their context, could readily enough be paralleled by language written calmly by leading churchmen, without creating the least consternation. Thus, to take one illustration, if I have said—"What an utterly baffling arithmetical puzzle seems the conventional dogma of the Trinity," no less a dignitary than Dean Stanley had written concerning the terms of the Baptismal Formula, as used in the Athanasian creed—"They are used like algebraic symbols, which would be equally appropriate if they were inverted, or if other words were substituted for them." *

On one or two points it may be well that I should guard the reader in advance. When, in considering the dogmas which have occasioned

* "Christian Institutions": p. 297.

such offence to hosts of men, I speak of "the Church" as in any wise responsible for these dogmas, I am not referring to the Protestant Episcopal Church, but to the "Holy Church Universal," which our collect recognizes as comprising "all who profess and call themselves Christians." Because it is but a part of that 'Church Universal' no one church can escape identification, in the popular mind, with the body at large, and even with the most objectionable members of it. What is known as Calvinism has unquestionably moulded the thought and temper of Protestantism, and it is vain for any one church, which is itself more or less affected by this theology, to draw off by itself and disclaim altogether the odium which attaches to that system. Men outside the churches mass them all together as "the Christian Church," and conclude them all in the common sentence which Calvinism draws forth from them. There is a certain rough justice in this indiscriminate judgment which should, at least, make the different churches feel their mutual responsibility, as the members of a common Christianity. Nor am I, in speaking of the doctrines of "the Church," always referring to the pronouncements of Councils and the formulas of Creeds, but rather, quite often, to the popular theology which has been begotten by Calvinism, and which, however its parent may desire to disown it, avouches in every feature its origin. It is doubtless true, and it is a truth which I have been trying in these pages to bring out, that we should carefully distinguish between official statements of churches in council assembled and the unofficial opinions which shape themselves into the actual theology of Christendom; but since this popular theology is a fact and since it is the natural interpretation of the Calvinistic symbols in the average mind, it is the theology which the average man knows as the doctrine of the Church. When, then, Philistinism attacks this popular theology, as constituting Christian doctrine, it is but a partial escape that is won by drawing back within the inner lines of official dogmas. The Christian Church has not prevented the development of this outer system of belief, which has simply followed in rude fashion the outlines of the inner walls. Christianity can escape responsibility for the weaknesses of the outer walls only by calling its followers in from their indefensible positions and by taking down from them its flag. History shows plainly enough that

it has never been the official theology of the doctors which has represented Christianity to the world, but the unofficial theology of the priests and preachers and people. This wins men to the Church or drives them from it. This constitutes, practically, the teaching of "the Church," in any period.

In the third and last section of the series, no complete defence of the Essential Faiths is to be expected—since none was contemplated. I sought, not to prove them true but, simply to indicate that no most modern knowledge can prove them false. I confined myself, therefore, to the consideration of the prime factors of those faiths. I did not attempt to carry the thought of God or of Christ above the basic elements—content if I could help any one to feel in the old, familiar conceptions, a solid ground of verifiable truth, upon which he could for himself develop a fuller faith. These sermons constitute, therefore, no complete statement of my own belief, such as some of my clerical friends seem to be expecting in them. I do not feel called upon by anything which I have taught to make any other protestation of faith than that which I affirm publicly whenever I use the Catholic Creeds. That I remain in the Protestant Episcopal Church is the evidence that I think myself loyal to those Creeds. "Who art thou that judgest thy brother? To his own Master he standeth or falleth."

Let me commend to those who are so sorely troubled about other people's consciences those wise words of the great-souled Dean of Westminster—words which have an even wider reach than the limits of the Thirty-nine Articles.

"There is a hope that they (the Thirty-nine Articles) may become, as they are called by these two Primates (Bramhall and Usher), *Articles of Peace*—Articles of Peace, because not articles of Belief; Articles of Peace, and therefore not weapons of hatred. 'That work which Tract XC. effected will never be undone, so long as the Articles shall last.' That work, indeed, in a far deeper sense than the authors of those words intended, never will be undone—the work of showing how every opinion can find its resting-place somewhere in their manifold statements; how none can be condemned merely because of apparent inconsistency with them; how none can be taunted with neglecting their details, if he accepts their general substance;

how inadequate and powerless they are as expressions of absolute dogmatic truth. They may still be read as guides to the theology of the Reformation; they may still be used as protections for the weaker party in the church; they may still be employed as indications of the form which the general doctrine of Christianity took in England in the sixteenth century. But they can be no more used, as they have been used—for the purpose of multiplying division and distrust, and of furnishing food for those unhappy insinuations of dishonesty and inconsistency and perfidy which apply either to no one or to every one, and which either invite legal processes against every one or against no one, of all those who have signed them from the Primate down to the Curate, from the extremest Liberal to the extremest Conservative.”—[STANLEY: “Essays on Church and State”; p. 241.]

R. HEBER NEWTON.

GARDEN CITY, *July 1*: 1885.



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“PHILISTINISM.”

I.

CONCERNING “PHILISTINISM” AND ITS GOLIATH.

“And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath.”—I Samuel, xvii : 4.

AN old story this, of the Philistine who defied the army of Israel, with great bravado, but who could not stand before a pebble from the brook, slung by the hand of the lad who trusted in the Lord ; yet a story which, in one form or another, repeats itself in the history of the conflicts of the spiritual Israel with the heathenism of our human nature. Our age has coined a term wherewith to describe the crass conceit which opposes itself to culture, the raw ignorance which defies the advances of knowledge, the shallow scepticism which takes on airs of superiority before a religion which is at once rational and reverent ; the manifold absurdities of an intellectual cockneyism, in its attitude towards the higher thought and life ; and this term, curiously enough, carries us back to the ancient story of the Hebrews, as to a parable of humanity, illustrating the charac-

ter and results of what we now mean by "Philistinism."

Still there comes, ever and anon, out of the camp of the Philistines, some doughty champion who creates a panic among those in the armies of Israel whose trust is in the conventional armor of the ecclesiastical battle-field and not in the Living God; in their elaborate and somewhat antiquated "Defences of the Faith," "Evidences of Christianity," "Bodies of Systematic Theology," and what not, rather than in the simple truths which the devout lad can find in his native fields, the "sermons in stones, and books in the running brooks," which, read by him whose soul communes with God, establish faiths that no Goliath of Gath can overcome.

I.

Our country has witnessed a remarkable phenomenon during the last few years. A brilliant lecturer has been going through the length and breadth of the land, lecturing in our theatres and halls, on Sunday evenings, to crowded audiences, and making in every lecture the most sweeping attacks upon all that is ordinarily understood to constitute the Christian religion. Watching his course through several years, it has appeared to me that he has been doing great harm, along with some real good. I propose to speak frankly to the young men who listen to me, concerning the work of this critic of

Christianity, and concerning the shallow scepticism which finds its noisiest vociferator in this Goliath of the Philistines.

Few, I believe, call in question the genial personal character of the eloquent lecturer. Every one admits his great ability as a popular orator. All who listen to him feel that there is in him a kindly humanity. The great virtues of domesticity have been most eloquently lauded by him. He earnestly urges men to make happy homes around them. There is not apparent, beneath his criticism, any desire to overthrow the moral bases of society. Any one who knows what the attacks upon Christianity have too often been in the past, will appreciate these admissions.

Further than this, let me frankly own to you that I believe this lecturer is, in his rough way, doing a certain service to the cause of enlightened religion. It does not look so to the devout believer, but he who knows the extent and depth of the obscurantism which is still found within the churches will be forced to admit that even such coarse attacks upon the beliefs of Christendom may have their part to do in forcing forward the growth of a reasonable religion. We may well long for a wiser, calmer and more reverential mode of doing even the most needful work of destruction, as I for one do most deeply ; but alas ! such work is too often left by the churches to be done by just such hands.

Nature does not seem to be over-nice in picking her instruments, when she sees a great job of demolition before her. She pushes to the front some stalwart form, whose mighty arm deals no mincing blows, knocking down many a venerable image, injuring much that is most valuable in the walls of society, but none the less pulling effectually down the rotten battlements which she had set herself at work to reconstruct. Hosts of men who have shocked their contemporaries, by their method of attack upon the superstitions of their age, who have, it must be confessed, done incalculable harm to the youth of their day, have none the less proven to have had their part to play in the reconstruction of religion itself. So profound is my conviction that the future of the Christian religion depends upon its being rendered reasonable, upon its being freed from the burdens of superstition, upon its being made absolutely free and open to all human thought; so profound is my conviction that the greatest foe to religion to-day is the spirit which would force the thought of our age within forms of belief which are no longer in harmony with reason and conscience—that I, for one, cannot fail to recognize, in this popular orator's sledge-hammer blows against certain paganisms of Christianity, a service in the gigantic task of leading the faith of the past on into the faith of the future; while I shrink in pain from his manner of doing this work, while I am disgusted

with his shallow criticisms of the deeper faiths of man, and while I abhor intensely his reckless way of sowing broadcast the seeds of the worst of human ills—Atheism.

Having admitted all this, in simple justice to the man, and in simple truth to the facts of our situation, I may pass on to speak the more frankly of the evil of this lecturer's work. It may be needful to clear a forest, but when one has set a stout-armed woodman at the job of cutting down certain superfluous and rotten trees, it is not altogether satisfactory to find that he has cleared out the entire woods and left your land shadeless. I set an innocent son of Erin at work, one day in early summer, a couple of years ago, upon the job of weeding out my tomato-patch; and on my return from the city he met me with a beaming face, and asked me to come out and look at his day's work. I did so. The weeds were all out—and so were the tomatoes! Let us have some discrimination in any work of clearing out. Too much of a good thing is by no means good. The iconoclast needs to study moderation.

Now it seems to me that the essential defect of this lecturer's course, even where he is attacking undoubted errors and evils in Christianity, is that, while doing a needful work of destruction, he is decidedly overdoing it. Could his eloquence and wit be turned simply against the abuses of the Church

and the corruptions of the faith, his work would be an unmingled good. The mischief is that he loses his head in the fire of his onset, and attacks religion itself, and the deepest faiths by which man lives. Alike in his manner and in his matter he is thoroughly and dangerously faulty as an iconoclast; so that the influence which he leaves behind him must be, for hosts of young men in our day, far more largely evil than good.

No less impartial an authority than Goethe has laid down the principle that reverence is the heart of religion. In this he speaks, consciously or unconsciously, after the wisdom of a greater far than he. Jesus Christ opened the matchless prayer of universal religion with an aspiration of reverence—Hallowed be Thy Name. There is no fear of any doubter who stands amid the wonders of nature and the greater marvels of human life with bared head, in an attitude of awe. Whatever the intellectual result of his questioning, his spiritual life is unharmed while, before the infinite mysteries of life, he wonders and worships. Alas! for him however, when from his soul there passes this sense of awe; when he can look into the face of nature and see nothing to lead him to his knees; when he can look into the depths of the human soul and not say: "Lo, this is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of Heaven." The peculiar danger of our age, intensified in our land, is the loss of reverence. The

emancipation of childhood leaves our boys and girls no longer reverent before their seniors. The reign of the common people makes every Tom and Bill the critics of the heroes and statesmen who lead the nation. The familiarity which students of physical science gain with the mysteries of nature is apt, in average minds, to blind them to that which ought to waken worship. The overthrow of idols in our temples seems, for the present, to empty life of sacredness, and, in our new-found freedom of reason, a young man feels free to point a joke from the dearest faiths by which his mother lived. That which more than aught else shocks me in the work of this lecturer is that he seems to leave no feeling of reverence unsmirched by the hand of a coarse humor. He is doing therein a more dangerous work than by any criticisms he makes, or by any arguments that he advances. One may successfully criticize his criticisms and effectually disprove his reasonings, but what can one do with the spirit of irreverence which he has wakened in the souls of young men?

Of all the pictures of the spirit of evil which the masters of human literature have given, there is no touch of genius more suggestive to my mind than that light stroke of the hand of Goethe, with which he represents Mephistopheles, in the very presence of the Most High, as joking with the Lord. Whatever we think, my friends, let us be serious in our

thinking. Life is no jest. We stand amid mysteries which may well awe the lightest heart ; before a destiny which may well spur the most frivolous spirit. Let us not play with the eternal realities. When we are hewing our way, with the strokes of our questionings, through the jungles of superstition, let it be, as with Christian in the old parable, feeling around us the breath of dread shapes of evil, against which we need to watch and pray each step we take.

II.

If we examine the matter of the lecturer's discourses, we shall find him continually pushing his attacks to an unreasonable and dangerous extreme ; pulling down, not alone the rotten bits of the wall, but the whole wall of the temple itself.

Concerning his attacks on the Bible, for example, we shall observe this spirit very strikingly. With what keen wit and stinging sarcasm he attacks the traditional notion of the Bible ! But he pushes on beyond any legitimate criticism when he undertakes to create the impression that there is nothing left of the Bible that is worthy of our reverence.

He tries in one of his lectures to persuade his hearers that there is no certainty concerning the historic character of the gospels, most ludicrously failing in the eyes of men who know whereof he is speaking. Let it be granted that we have no suffi-

cient evidence that the gospels were written by the men whose name they bear; that we are entirely uncertain as to the precise date of any of these writings; that each is the work of more than one writer's hand; that all are more or less imperfect and faulty, and by no means infallibly exact records of the life they depict—it by no means follows that they are not genuine historic documents of Original Christianity, and sufficiently accurate records of the Founder of Christianity.

The fact is that there is as much certainty, to say the least, concerning the historic character of the gospel-writings as concerning the historic character of any of the great works of antiquity. We have no original manuscripts of the gospels, but we have no autographs of Plato, of Cicero or of Cæsar. We have no manuscripts of the gospels which date from the age of these books; neither have we such manuscripts in the case of Plato, of Cicero or of Cæsar. Concerning the New Testament writings, as concerning any works of classical antiquity, the facts are that we have manuscripts dating some centuries back of our age; dating to within a number of centuries of the age in which the books claim to have been written; that we have abundant references to the existence of such books, through a long line of writers, up to the very age in which they profess to have been written; that we have ample quotations from them to warrant the conclusion that the books

that we now hold are in reality the books from which these early writers drew. You can only throw away the historic character of the gospel-writings by throwing away the historic character of Plato, of Cicero and of Cæsar. They stand and fall together. If our lecturer is prepared to ask us to reject the belief that, in Jowett's splendid edition, we have not a veritable rendering into English of the works of the great Plato; or that, in the orations which you studied in college, or in the Commentaries which you so laboriously analyzed in school, we have not the very discourses of Cicero, and the very histories of Cæsar—then he may fairly ask us to reject the belief that we have, in our gospels, the very writings which appeared in the early Church, giving accounts of the life of the most wonderful of the sons of men, which were commonly received by those who had the best opportunities of knowing the original facts.

This whole subject of the nature of the evidence upon which we believe that we possess the veritable works of antiquity has been most carefully gone over by modern scholarship, and there is no longer any room for loose talking upon such a topic. Any one can see for himself how solid is the ground upon which Literature rests, in accepting the classics of Greece and Rome, and how still more solid is the ground on which the Christian Church reposes, in receiving the classics of Original Christianity, by reading that interesting book of

Isaac Taylor entitled "History of the Transmission of Ancient Books to Modern Times."

Let us suppose that a young man, who has been reading the charming History which bears the name of Herodotus, asks himself how he can be really sure that we hold in this work the veritable writings of the "Father of History," and that they are reliable histories. He finds, at the outset of his inquiries, that the earliest known printed edition of the book, in its original tongue, dates from 1502 A.D. If he knows Greek well enough to compare his English translation with this edition, he satisfies himself that our work corresponds quite accurately with it; and thus is assured that its editor had before him a manuscript copy of a work bearing the name of Herodotus, which was substantially identical with the History which Rawlinson, for example, presents to us in such attractive form. This early edition claimed to be "corrected by a collection of many manuscripts." Our inquirer then proceeds to investigate the extant manuscripts of this, so called, Herodotus. He discovers that there are now in existence, in different libraries, a number of manuscript copies of the work. These manuscripts bear upon them various dates, ranging between the fifteenth and the tenth centuries of our era. He finds that we are abundantly able to verify these claims, since the close study of this subject has enabled us to

classify manuscripts chronologically, by their characteristics of material, ink, penmanship, etc. Applying these tests, he assures himself that they do really belong to the periods in which they represent themselves to have been written ; a conclusion which is confirmed by well attested traditions concerning some of the more highly prized manuscripts, through which they can be traced up to their respective ages. Our literary sceptic then undertakes the labor of comparing the printed Greek text with the leading manuscripts. There is, he discovers, a substantial identity between the fifteen manuscripts still known to us which may have been examined by the editors of the earliest printed texts. He further learns that they have been quite accurately followed in the printed editions. These codices, then, evidently rendered quite faithfully some common original. There was, our sceptic finds, most certainly some ancient work which has been, from at least the twelfth century onwards, preserved intact, and accredited to Herodotus. To learn how ancient this work really is and with what truthfulness it bears the name of its reputed author, our student must then proceed to inform himself as to the leading writers of the previous centuries, and as to the chief authors of Greece and Rome up to the age of Herodotus. He must search their extant writings for quotations from this History, for allusions to it,

for descriptions of it and for summaries of its contents, and then he must group these witnesses in chronological order. To make such a cross-examination thorough, he ought further to carry through the same process for each witness whom he summons; and nothing less than this has been the gigantic task of Literary Criticism.

He can thus, in time, arrange his leading witnesses in the following order: Eustathius, Archbishop of Thessalonica; close of the 12th century: Suidas, a learned Byzantine monk, who gives a life of Herodotus and two hundred references to his work; close of 11th century: Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who describes the Nine Books of Herodotus so as to make it certain that our text was before him; 9th century: Procopius, the historian of the reign of Justinian; middle of 6th century: Stobaeus; middle of 5th century: The Emperor Julian; middle of 4th century: Longinus, the celebrated philosophical critic; 3d century: Athenaeus and Diogenes Laertius; 2d century: Plutarch, Josephus and Pliny the Elder, the historians; latter part of 1st century. Our era would be passed and the pre-Christian period be entered, with Strabo, the learned geographer; B.C. 54—A.D. 24. Then our inquirer would find crowding testimonies; Cornelius Nepos, the historian; Cicero; Aristotle; Thucydides; etc.; and thus he would reach the very age of Herodotus. As a

result of these studies the sceptical student would be confronted with a long line of witnesses; whose standing is unimpeachable; by whom the whole distance from the 12th century to the age of the great Grecian historian would be spanned; none of whom ever speak with the slightest hesitancy as to the authorship of the work which they quote or to which they allude; and all of whom, when they quote it directly, or when they describe it, make it certain that they had before them the very books which we now hold, as the works of Herodotus. Our inquirer, if he were honest, would rise from such a study with an absolute conviction of the genuineness of the History of Herodotus.

This would not, of course, carry with it the assurance that Herodotus, though an actual historic author, was a reliable historian. The authority of the venerable Father of History has indeed been constantly called in question. It was for a while the fashion to treat him as a brilliant romancer. As the result of the fuller knowledge of our age, scholars have come round to the old opinion that he was an honest, and for the most part a trustworthy historian. If our sceptical student wished to satisfy himself personally upon this point, he would find another huge labor before him. He would have to study the other ancient historians, compare their accounts with that given by Herodotus, and, where they differed, pursue long and

round-about researches to reach a conclusion as to their relative reliability. He would have to follow our later historians and geographers and travellers, and throw their light upon his pages. In these toilsome studies our young critic would learn the reasons for the renewed confidence that is felt in the ancient Grecian, and would satisfy himself that his History was, on the whole, an authentic story. When these two lines of inquiry had been pushed far enough to reach an intelligent conclusion, our young sceptic in literature would be converted to a rational faith in Herodotus, and would know the grounds for his faith.

In precisely the same way, the young man who is sceptical about our New Testament Gospels may, if he is able to pursue such learned labors, satisfy himself that they are genuine and authentic records of the Founder of Christianity. Lacking the leisure or the scholarship to carry through such an inquiry he may, at least, have the wisdom to trust those who have made such learned studies, and to decline to be influenced by flippant and shallow sneers against the historic character of writings whose genuineness and authenticity, as works of primitive Christianity, have been settled by the same literary processes which are conclusive as to the Greek and Roman classics.

It is impossible, within my limits to-day, to indicate satisfactorily the full nature of the evidence

for the historic character of our Gospels. Printed editions of the New Testament reach back to the very discovery of the printing-press. A comparison of the Greek text which we hold to-day with that of the edition of Erasmus, in 1516, which is still extant, shows a substantial identity. The earliest printed editions of the Greek New Testament were prepared from a collation of pre-existing manuscript copies of this work. As will be readily understood in the case of a Sacred Book of a great Institution like the Catholic Church, such manuscripts abounded in the middle ages. Their manufacture was the chief industry of the host of Monasteries which existed in those ages. Hundreds of these manuscripts have been preserved to our own day. In the preparation of some recent editions of the New Testament, upwards of six hundred have been examined. The evidence as to the correctness of the text of our New Testament compares, therefore, with that in the case of Herodotus as six hundred to fifteen. The investigation of these manuscripts forms a distinct speciality of scholarship, in which eminence is to be won only by a life's labors. These manuscripts are classified and grouped and studied with the same thoroughness with which a naturalist follows his researches into the history of a beetle or an earth-worm. Some few of these manuscripts reach up to the early centuries of Christianity. In the University of Cambridge there is a manuscript

which dates, according to different estimates, from between the seventh and the fifth centuries.

In the British Museum there is another which dates from the fifth century; and in the Vatican, at Rome, there is yet another, which is assigned to the fourth century. These early manuscripts give us practically the same writings which we now hold. We have no manuscripts of a date earlier than the beginning of the fourth century, and, therefore, to carry the evidence up beyond this point we must call in another line of testimony.

We find references to the Gospels, quotations from them and descriptions of them in writers of every century of the Christian era. We can trace quotations from the New Testament in no less than one hundred and eighty ecclesiastical writers, whose works are still extant. It has been said, on good authority, that, were all the copies of the New Testament lost, we might restore the text of it from the works of men who wrote before the seventh century. In the first four centuries we find upwards of fifty authors, who testify to facts which are narrated or implied in the Gospels. They cover each generation between the close of the third century and the close of the first century. They represent different countries, tongues and churches.

Nor is this all. We know of ancient Versions of the New Testament—translations into other tongues—which certify at once the genuineness and the

substantial authenticity of our Gospels as works of Primitive Christianity. When, to all this, there is to be added the fact that, from the beginning of the history of Christianity down to our own day, there has been a constant succession of hostile criticisms from without the Church and of sectarian controversies within the Church, which have together subjected the Gospels to a fire such as no other books of the western world have ever received, we may feel quite sure that there has been no failure to detect the weak points in the evidence for the genuineness and authenticity of our records of the Founder of Christianity. We may rest assured, therefore, that the historic character of the books, as now held by competent critics, after such an ordeal, is criticism proof.

Any one who wants to satisfy himself upon these points can readily do so by examining two moderate sized books—"The New Testament in Greek," by Professors Westcott and Hort; and "The Canon of the New Testament," by Prof. Westcott. The conclusion reached will doubtless be that of Isaac Taylor: "It will be seen that the integrity of the records of the Christian faith is substantiated by evidence in a tenfold proportion more various, copious, and conclusive, than that which can be adduced in support of any other ancient writings. If, therefore, the question had no other importance belonging to it than what may attach to a purely

literary inquiry, or if only the strict justice of the case were regarded, the authenticity of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures could never come to be controverted, till the entire body of classical literature had been proved to be spurious."*

Such a verification of the genuineness of the Gospels, reached through a collation of so many manuscripts, versions and quotations in other works, carries with it a certification of the substantial authenticity of these writings; satisfying us that they are not only veritable documents of Original Christianity, but, upon the whole, reliable memories of the Founder of Christianity.

I hold it an unpardonable fault for any one, who knows whereof he speaks, so to speak that he leaves on the mind of young men the impression that there is nothing left of the historic character of the Gospels.

In another famous lecture our orator ranges through the Pentateuch, with a keen scent for every trace of contradiction, for every trail of legend. He brings clearly out the mistakes of Moses—*i. e.*, the mistakes of the books attributed to Moses. He arrays these mistakes of Moses in telling line. He bears down with them heavily upon the champions of the traditional Bible, and, as men of common sense clearly see, routs them from the field. The mass of

* "History of the Transmission of Ancient Books to Modern Times"; p. 5.

his hearers go away convinced that the Pentateuch is no infallible book ; that it contains discrepancies, errors, marvels of the imagination, and words which, literally attributed to the living God, are absolutely blasphemous.

This work needs to be done. While the churches insist on having in the Pentateuch a literal, infallible history, a transcript of a miraculous communication from God to man, it is needful that the folly of such a theory should be shown, if even in such strong colors as those which our lecturer throws upon the canvas. What then? All this, reasonable and honest men have seen and confessed within the churches. So far from their having thought that the value of the Pentateuch was destroyed thereby, they have learned to recognize in it, through these admissions, a new and higher value. I have sought before to show you how entirely possible it is to admit all that criticism and common sense have to object to the Pentateuch, as read in the old light, and still to see in these writings a fresh charm and a nobler value. In it we have almost the oldest thoughts of man, upon the deepest problems which have ever exercised the human mind ; some of the earliest and most beautiful poems of imagination, as touched by the hand of religion.

Here we possess, welded together in a unity, the legends of a noble race, the traditions of the foundation of a great nation, the rude germs of the jur-

isprudence of a remarkable civilization. These books hold the secret of the growth of some ordinary Semitic tribes out of the lowest and coarsest forms of fetichism, through the various stages of polytheism, into the noble Theism which prepared the way for Christianity. All this we have, and much more; marvellous gleams of spiritual truth; flashes of light out of the darkness; whispers as from the deepest soul of man, as from the Spirit who always breathes within the soul of man; words proceeding out of the mouth of God on which man liveth. Because of this, the Pentateuch is not a book to jeer at and to flout, but one to study, admire and revere. And yet our witty lecturer would leave the young men who listen to him with the impression that there was nothing left in the Pentateuch save the material for his audacious humor.

We may then frankly admit all that is said against the traditional notion of the Bible, and yet claim that it is a book like unto which there is none other in the world, a book without which the world cannot afford to do. The Old Testament is the record of the history and of the literature of the people out of whom came, in the fulness of time, the Son of Man. Its value is its illustration of the growth of Israel, ethically and spiritually, towards the Supreme Revelation. Every blot upon it, when the book is viewed as an infallible revelation, becomes a part of the truth which it is to teach us—

the truth of the progress of religion. We see in its grossest stories and most offensive utterances the low level of the ancient people, from which they were gradually raised into the light and life of the great prophets. The New Testament is a record of the movement of Original Christianity—of its works and of its thoughts.

The Old and New Testament centre in the bosom of Jesus Christ, who, if he be nothing else, is the most wonderful being earth has ever seen; the highest teacher of morality and religion; the embodiment of man's loftiest spiritual ideals. Until the time comes when we find a diviner Master of Life than Jesus, we shall need to study reverently the books which alone picture Him before us and interpret Him to us. Our fathers and mothers learned from the Bible the secret of the noblest life. Do you think that you will live the nobler without it? Are you among that rare few who can hope to live nobly at all without it? Hold it yet awhile, young men, and let not the eloquence or the wit of the most powerful orator persuade you to throw it away.

III.

Again, as of old, the cry goes up in Israel—"The Philistines are upon us!" The forces of a raw rationalism, the hosts of an unreasonable unbelief surround the spiritual Israel; noisy and defiant,

scornfully speaking great swelling words against those who call still upon the name of the Lord. Tarry ye calmly in your tents, O Israel! The ark of Religion is safe. The Shrine of the Soul cannot be touched by any Goliath of Gath. The plains that Faith has held unlawfully against Knowledge must be surrendered, but her native haunts among the hills will be left inviolable by a foe which is a friend in disguise; who is seeking not a humiliating conquest of Religion but an honorable alliance with it on behalf of Reason. The end of the Philistinism which seeks to dispossess Religion from the land will be, now as of old, defeat. A deeper culture and a sounder science always overcome the attacks of that very dangerous thing—"a little learning." Every new knowledge seems to be irreligious, but by the time that it grows of age it learns to worship. An unreasonable unbelief gives way before the reverence of reason. A ripe rationalism drives a raw rationalism from the field, and seals anew its league with Faith. After every fresh foray of the Philistines upon the grounds of Religion, the old record has again been entered—"And the land had rest forty years."

II.

CHRISTIANITY AND ITS CRITICS.

“Ye shall receive power.”—Acts i: 8.

POWER of a most remarkable nature was certainly evolved somehow, from somewhere, in the early movement of Christianity. Does that power continue to act through Christianity, or has it become exhausted in the lapse of ages? Men outside of the churches are quite positive that this power is failing. In becoming an institution, they tell us, Christianity has ceased to be an inspiration. The organization which has grown around the vital force of Christianity has drained that force, in feeding its vast bulk. The body becoming obese and moribund, the soul is sickening unto death within it.

When the Philistines issue forth upon a new campaign, they are sure to attack Institutional Christianity. They know the weak points in the construction of the Church, and throw themselves fiercely upon these vulnerable spots in the walls of Zion. The success which is thus won so easily deceives some of the good folk within the city of God into fancying that it is about being taken by

storm. Let us consider, to-day, the grounds for some of the strictures which the critics of Christianity pass upon it, that we may know whether its strength has indeed become weakness. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her : tell the towers thereof. Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses, that ye may tell them that come after."

The lecturer whose work we were considering last Sunday, rarely ever speaks without making hard thrusts at the Church. He is fond of poking fun at the clergy, and of showing up the hollowness and unreality of Christendom. Let us again frankly admit that there is only too much room for such sallies of wit. The clergy are by no means saints nor sages. For the most part they are average human beings, with the limitations, defects, foibles and faults of other men. They say plenty of foolish things, and do plenty of wrong things, like some other classes which perchance may be known to you. They are somewhat stolidly conservative, assert a little too much concerning their order, and are not always as ready as the angels to welcome new ideas. With all their faults, there are, however, few harder working bodies of men in the land. The pay of the average country parson is a bare subsistence, upon which he toils quietly and rarely makes a strike. Let our follies and our faults be unhesitatingly ridiculed ; but such critics of

Christianity are scarcely the men to throw stones too recklessly at such a body.

The church as a whole is by no means the church triumphant. She has made plenty of mistakes in the past. She is making plenty of mistakes now. Her machinery is far from perfect. Her ideals are low, it may be. Her realization of the truth of Jesus Christ comes lamentably short of His high visions. Christianity, as an organized system of society, is full of gross inconsistencies, and grotesque attempts at piecing out the ethics of Jesus from the ethics of Paganism. It is a shame and a disgrace to the Christian Church that Western society is no further along in the line of human progress. Let us admit all this, with entire unreserve. Let us be glad that so doughty a foe as this Goliath of the Philistines walks up and down before the armies of Jehovah, ridiculing their feebleness and mocking their inefficiency. We need to be thoroughly roused to a determined effort to make our civilization conform to the patterns shown upon the Mount; to make it the Christian society which it is in name, but which it is not in fact. All this we should frankly own, but when a critic leaves the impression upon the young men who listen to him that there is nothing left of Christianity except a corpse that needs quick burial, we may well grow indignant.

We may go further in our confession. The Christian church has, without doubt, stood, again

and again, in the way of human progress. To her eternal shame, let the record stand of her bigotry and superstition, of her intolerance and persecution ! None feels more bitterly that shame than he who would be an outcast upon earth had he no longer a home in the church of Jesus Christ. But over against this tale of shame is a tale of honor. Have you ever seriously thought of what our civilization owes to Christianity ?

I.

Go, in fancy, back to Rome, in the year in which that little gray-eyed, hooked-nose Jew walked through the gates of the imperial city, between two soldiers—the herald of a new religion. Give yourself to a tour of the city, with a view to discovering the state of society in the capital of the world. On every hand are the tokens of vast wealth, of noble arts, and of an advanced civilization. What are the moral conditions of this society ? Enter one of the great palaces which stand amid their gardens on the Quirinal ; make your way, through the marble-floored halls, into the luxurious court where, upon the tessellated pavement, beneath the rich leaved fig and orange trees, a lordly Roman lounges. Enter into conversation with him, to the accompaniment of the fountain's liquid splashing, and draw out from him the facts of the social life of these haughty patricians who rule the earth.

You enquire about the position of woman. You learn that it is a very humiliating one. She is under the perpetual tutelage of her male relatives. She has next to no legal rights of person or of property. She has no recognized voice in the government of the family, and no rights whatever in the great life outside of the home. Her very life is in the hands of her husband.

You ask about the position of children. You learn that the father has complete and absolute rights over his children. He can exile them, sell them into slavery or put them to death. He can order his son to marry whom he chooses, and to leave his wife when he wills.

You wish to know how marriage is regarded. The actual relationship, you find, is one of extreme laxity. A sort of free marriage prevails—a tie which can scarcely be said to form a knot, but merely a slip-knot, that can be run out with the least possible trouble. Divorces are so easy as to startle you. The desire on the part of either husband or wife to separate, expressed in writing, is all that the complaisant law requires. "Have you not heard," your host inquires, "how Paula Valeria announced to her husband, the other day, on his return from a journey, that she had obtained a divorce without cost, and was about to marry Decius Brutus?" "Some noble ladies," he tells you, "reckon the years, not by the names of the consuls who ruled

in them, but by the names of their annual husbands. Law is struggling with the general license, but thus far in vain."

"What parental responsibility can prevail," you ask, "in such a state of society?" Your host does not quite understand so alien an idea. "What do you mean by parental responsibility? Of course we take care of the children whom we wish to have and who please us; and, as for the rest, we get rid of them as easily as we can. If children come who prove weak and ill formed, we 'expose' them." "Expose them—what is that?" you ask. "O, that means that they are taken out in the evening to the foot of the Lacterian Column and left there. There are always persons prowling round who are hunting for superfluous babies." "What do they want with them?" "Well, generally, they train the boys for slaves, and the girls for——. There is plenty of money in this sort of trade, and so parents can feel pretty sure that their superfluous babies are taken care of by some one. Those who do not like such careers for their babies often take them out into the fields around the city, and leave them there. They do not linger long, as a rule. This is what 'exposing' means. It is a poor sentimental sort of make-shift after all—a false weakness. Parents of the true Roman grit prefer to do the job up thoroughly, and see themselves that their superfluous babies are quietly and quickly put out of life. A comedy that

is having quite a run now in the metropolis turns upon the foolish softness of a mother, in exposing a girl baby rather than killing it outright." "But is this child-murder tolerated in good society?" "Certainly. Our best moralists approve of it. Quintillian says—'To kill a man is often held to be a crime, but to kill one's child is sometimes considered a beautiful action.' Our great Seneca observes justly—'Monstrous offspring we destroy; children too, if weak and unnaturally formed from birth, we drown. It is not anger but reason thus to separate the useless from the sound.'"

"What, then," you ask, "can be the moral character of woman in such a society?" Your haughty host smiles, and whispers to you familiar secrets of good society—which we may not overhear. He raises his voice as he speaks of the common facts, about which no one hesitates to talk. "Have you not heard of the saying of one of our satirists, that women laugh as they pass the altar of modesty? Modesty is held in society to be a confession of ugliness. Only the other day, the Senate passed a law prohibiting ladies of patrician blood from taking up the only public profession for which many of them evince any disposition—one which does not well bear naming."

"What, then," you ask, "is the code of personal purity among men in good society?" Your host gives you such a vacant look that you see that your

words convey no idea at all to him. You think it time to change the conversation.

You ask him about those silent figures that glide to and fro upon the services of the household. "They are my slaves. They are from all parts of the earth—men, women and children of every race. Some are captives, taken in war. Others have been bought of the slave-dealers, down on the quays of Ostia. They are slaves in the most absolute sense. They have no rights which the Roman is bound to respect. They know no legal marriage; have no legal parentage; possess no legal property. They and their children may be given away, hired out, sold, and seized for debt. When they are worn out, we get rid of them as best we can. They are often 'exposed,' after the fashion of disposing of children. Cato unhesitatingly directed that an old slave or a sick slave should be sold. They are only chattels. One of our great Stoics speaks of 'a slave or any other animal.' In Rome, not long ago, a wealthy citizen had promised freedom to a slave, and broke his promise. The slave, maddened by disappointment, assassinated his master. The law of the Empire was carried out, and the whole six hundred slaves of the estate were executed. Flaminius put a slave to death to gratify a guest who had never seen a man die. Pollio, at times, amuses himself by feeding his carp with choice bits of slaves."

Having by this time gained somewhat of an in-

sight into the manners of a Roman household, you suggest to your host that you would like to see something of the popular amusements of the Imperial City. He courteously offers to take you in his chariot to the Coliseum, where the Emperor is now giving some splendid games, to celebrate his recovery from sickness; games which have already continued one hundred and twenty days, and which have brought out ten thousand performers. You drive leisurely up the Via Sacra to the Coliseum, and your host hands in the tesserae, or tickets, which admit you to what the Barnum of those days might well have called "The biggest show on earth." One hundred thousand people crowd under the awning that covers the vast ellipse of masonry; packing the stone galleries which rise, one above another, to a height of a hundred and seventy feet. Every class in Rome is represented in this huge assemblage; the Emperor himself, Consuls, Senators, patricians of every rank, ladies of the court, vestal virgins, the solid people of the State, fathers and mothers with their children of all ages, as well as all varieties of laborers and slaves. The sport has begun, and you peer over the railings to see what it is. A pair of tawny lions are fighting savagely with one another, their thunderous roars drowned in the applause of the throng, as the maddened brutes tear each other to pieces, and are dragged out, mangled masses of bleeding flesh. Similar fights between

other wild beasts follow, until the people grow weary of this tame slaughter. Then a nearly naked Gaul springs into the arena, armed with a two-edged sword, and upon him a huge lion is let loose. The waning interest of the crowd revives, as this man fights for his life with the savage monster, and a genuine shout of enthusiasm goes up when the lion, bleeding from a dozen wounds, fells the brawny Gaul, and, with his paws upon his breast and his huge jaws closing around his throat, shows himself the victor. Other contests of man and beast in varying forms, follow, until they too pall upon the appetite of the crowd. Then a pair of gladiators, differently armed, appear, and passing before the Emperor's throne, salute him, and prepare for the mortal struggle; which is soon ended in the death of one of the pair, amid the resounding applause of the throng. Connoisseurs of dying agonies watch intently every writhing of pain, every shade of anguish on the brow of the victim. Other pairs come on the field of action, and finally the closing act of the day is opened—a grand battle of three hundred and twenty gladiators at once. The varying features of the battle rouse the multitude to a frenzy of enthusiasm, in whose thunders of applause the yells of the mangled victors and the cries of the dying are lost. The throng breaks up after this scene, to talk over, on the way home, the glorious sport of the day. This you find is Rome's ideal of pleasure.

You ask your host if there are no gentler amusements for the people? He takes you to one of the theatres, where you see what you cannot repeat here, spectacular plays whose scenes display women in absolute nudity.

You ask your host to show you the poor quarters. He takes you down by the Tiber, along the low districts which lie between the hills of the city, and you climb up and down the stairways of huge brick tenements, where you meet all forms of miserable poverty, and the most loathsome diseases of humanity. Sickened by the sight, you come forth into the air, and, drawing a long breath, ask your guide to take you to see the charities of this city of enormous wealth and of degraded poverty. "Charities?" He does not understand you. The word needs translating to him; for though he knows Greek, he can recall no use of *charis* which lets light in upon your query. You explain to him that you mean the Orphan Asylums, the Homes for Aged People, the Reformatories for Vicious Children, the Hospitals, the Lodging Houses, and all the array of kindly helps for want and suffering which the wealth of such a city has surely provided. Again you have to interpret each title to him, and tell him what it means; observing an ever increasing look of amazement spreading over his face. You find that he knows of no such institutions in this city of two million people. There are the daily

doles of bread to the poor by the State—a measure of political prudence; and there are, doubtless, hosts of daily acts of kindness on the part of individual citizens; but there are no great charities endowed by private wealth. You are thus drawn to ask if there is no sense of responsibility on the part of wealth; and you sound your courtly guide in vain for any traces of such a feeling. That sense is utterly absent, you find, in the typical Roman. It is an undeveloped function of conscience.

As you drive back to your host's palace, you wonder whether there is any sense of humanity in these strange people. You recall, with pleasure, the comedy which you beheld during the afternoon, in the course of which a player fairly brought down the house with this lofty sentiment—"I am a man; nothing human is alien to me." But you remember, also, that the man in the play who uttered this sentiment, so proudly, was the husband who rebuked his wife for her foolish weakness, in exposing her baby girl, instead of putting it to death outright. While you are musing over this queer sort of humanity, your host tells you that he has just heard from a friend, with whom he paused to chat a moment, that news of a great naval engagement has been brought to Rome—a battle between the Imperial Galleys and the fleet of pirates who infest the African coast; and that several of the Imperial Galleys were sunk or burned. You remem-

ber that these war-galleys are manned by slaves, who row their huge oars, tier above tier; and you ask if many of them were lost? He turns on you a pitying smile—"Why, of course, they all were lost. They go into action chained to the oaken benches, and, if the galley goes down, they go down like cats in a bag; if it burns, they roast like rats in a cage." His scornful lips show better than words what he thinks of a man who finds any interest in the fate of such human vermin. You have found out the humanity of Rome.

And so you bid adieu to your elegant host at the door of his *domus*, having seen somewhat of the life of Rome.

II.

Turn now, my friends, from this picture, which is by no means overdrawn, to the city in which we live. Its disorders are bad enough, but what a contrast its society presents to that of ancient Rome. Woman has by no means won her true position, but she is the social equal of man, protected in her most vital rights of person and of property, with a recognized status before the law; the true ruler in the home; the object of honor and reverence on the part of man. Children's rights are amply cared for by law. Their education is carried on from the cradle upward. The individuality of the child is thoroughly respected. Parents live to secure its

interests. Marriage falls far short of its ideal, but its ideal now is an unutterably high one. That ideal makes nothing less of it than a sacrament, a sacred bond, to be faithfully kept, "for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health, till death us do part."

The tone of domestic life is, upon the whole, pure and clean, sweet and true. No satirist to-day would dare to speak of woman as grave sages freely spake of her in Rome. Men, too, feel upon them the law of purity, and even though they fail of its high demands, they own the claims which they are too weak to fulfil. Slavery has disappeared from our society. Its latest form, mild and benign as compared with that of the ancient world, has been forever put away. All men are free before the law, and, despite of any inferiorities, "a man's a man for a' that." Human blood nowhere flows to please a gaping crowd. One such exhibition as those which Rome saw by scores every year, unmoved, would thrill the land with horror. Poverty, alas! exists still; for the task of reform is very far from complete; but over against our tenements rise multitudinous forms of charity. Scarcely a need of poverty is forgotten in the thoughtfulness of wealth. A sense of humanity has been awakened which cannot leave men content amid their personal comforts and joys, but girds them to the task of ministering to the needs of their suffering fellows; a sense of

humanity which is sweetening and sunning all spheres of life, even the bitterest and darkest ; which is caring for the vilest outcasts, and dealing patiently with the most hardened criminals ; which is sending out after our soldiers, in every war, sanitary and Christian commissions, to nurse the wounded back to life, and to cheer the dying down into the valley of the shadow of death ; which is wiping out all laws of blood from our statute-books, and is turning the punishment of our prisons into means of reformation ; which is spreading the strong arm of Law over even the dumb beasts in our streets. All this is but a faint outline of the well-nigh miraculous change which has passed over society, since the day when the little tent-maker of Tarsus passed up the avenues of Rome.

What has caused this astonishing change ? The combined action of many forces—forces which, taken all together, could not, however, have wrought this change without one all-important factor. It cannot have been merely the development of our Aryan blood, else why had not that blood thus developed through the splendid civilizations of Greece and Rome before our era, and why has not that blood thus developed in the civilization of India during our era ? It cannot have been merely the natural movement of Roman civilization. That civilization was dying at the heart, when our era opened. Its institutions grew more and more effete, its forces

grew ever weaker, its society grew ever more and more moribund, until the grave opened and the Roman empire ceased to be upon the earth. It cannot have been merely the new blood infused into the Roman race, from the fresh, young races of the north woods of Germany. Those Germanic peoples yielded to the growth of the modern world most needful elements, without which it could not have grown into its present form. But they brought into the decadent Roman Empire the faults and vices of raw races; impurities of their own, savageries quite equal to those of their conquerors. They had themselves to be made over, under the powerful hand of some creative agent, into the material for the modern man. It cannot have been merely the result of the many secular forces of European society—the action of economic, industrial, political, and scientific improvements—which have combined together to produce this new state. Mighty have been these forces, and without them our modern society could not have come into being. All of them, however, began their action long subsequent to the beginning of the reform of ancient Rome.

Back of all these factors, using them all towards the working of this social reformation, there has been a new moral force at work, which came into the world eighteen centuries ago. It is a fact of history that Christianity brought to bear upon Roman society the moral force to which, more than to

any other factor, the Western World owes the astonishing change which has taken place. A sacred passion for purity and justice aroused in the human breast, in the presence of One who lived so beautifully good as to thrill men's souls. Men became a-hungered for righteousness. They fell in love with goodness. A new sense of the awfulness of evil awakened in the human conscience, at the touch of this holy child of God. An enthusiasm of humanity was fired, in contact with the spirit of the Nazarene carpenter; and, under a freshened faith in a divine fatherhood, men learned a real brotherhood. These new ideals and aspirations drew men together in a new fellowship; and a society arose, out of which pulsed the force creating these reforms.

The Christian Church wrought at once upon the social position of woman. Its ideal of character, for the first time in the history of Europe, exalted the feminine qualities. Its honor of the Mother of Jesus honored all womanhood. Woman was taken into an active share in the administration of the charities of the churches. The early enemies of Christianity made it a reproach against the new religion that it placed woman in so conspicuous a position. The spirit of Him who "took little children up in His arms and blessed them" acted quickly upon the parental despotism of Rome. The idea of the Incarnation hallowed all infancy. The sacrament of baptism, making children members of the

church, gave childhood a new dignity. The sacredness of marriage, in the mind of Jesus, gave this fundamental institution of society a new character. The exigent ideal of personal purity which he breathed into the soul of women and of men made the existing codes of honor utterly shocking. The circulation of such literature as the New Testament Letters, among the earnest natures of Rome, meant nothing less than a revolution in social sentiment concerning the relation of the sexes. Law soon showed the working of this spirit. When we hear it declared, in Justinian's *Novellæ*, that "nothing in human affairs is so much to be venerated as marriage," we may be sure that here is a clear trace of the new influence. When Justinian says, "We enact then that all persons, as far as they can, shall preserve chastity, which alone is able to present the souls of men with confidence before God," we know immediately that here is a faint reflection of the new light shining in the world.

Christianity found the social germ cells which it vitalized, and out of which it builded up a new society, in the little confraternities of slaves which met secretly in the Catacombs; brotherhoods which celebrated a common meal, which assisted each other in sickness and secured for one another a decent burial. Into these proscribed fraternities, it brought a faith in a Father-God which made a human brotherhood seem real. From these secret

gatherings, slaves were welcomed to the larger societies of the Christians, which brought masters and slaves into a community. The richer members of these brotherhoods freely aided their poorer brethren. The slave sat by the side of the master at the secret common meal. In Christ Jesus there was 'neither bond nor free.' The Church early framed a prayer "for those that suffer in bondage." To free a slave became an act of piety. Christians were encouraged to use their wealth in this way. Burial pictures often represent masters as standing before the Good Shepherd, with a company of their slaves, whom they had freed at death, pleading for their masters in the last judgment. The clergy became known as "the brothers of the slaves." Later on, law began to show this reforming spirit. A collation of the passages of the later Roman law concerning slaves discloses a remarkable movement towards the amelioration and final extinction of slavery. That ideal was working which St. Theodore of Stude expressed—"Thou shalt possess no slave, neither for domestic use nor for the work of the fields: for man is made in the image of God."

The new spirit of humanity, which breathed from Jesus Christ, at once condemned utterly the brutal custom of 'exposing' children and the savage sports of the gladiatorial games. No one could remain in the Christian Church and deal thus inhumanly with his offspring. Catechumens were not allowed to

visit the gladiatorial exhibitions. Preachers thundered against these cruel sports. They came to an end finally, by the heroism of a monk—Telemachus; who leaped into the arena and forbade the wickedness, in the name of God; sealing his protest with his own blood, as the lions sprang upon him.

From the first, the Christian Church set itself to the task of ameliorating the conditions of poverty. The chief concern of the churches, after worship, preaching and instruction, became the organization of the new spirit of charity which it had inspired—that charity which has continued, down to our own day, its ever widening ministry of mercy. Christianity taught wealth a new duty, and laid upon it a responsibility which had never before been felt in Rome—the responsibility of the stewards of the Lord, who must needs give account to Him for their use of his wealth, placed in their hands. It was indeed a new spirit at work which led a Roman Emperor to declare, in a formal proclamation, that the true worship consisted in helping the poor. This spirit kindled the vision of a new ideal of society, a holy commonwealth, in which “all that believed were together and had all things in common.”

Wherever we search, in that ancient society, we find one and the same force at work, reforming its evils—the force of the new religion of Jesus.

Time will not allow of my tracing the continued

action of Christianity through the middle ages, into our modern era, and of my showing that, alongside of the evils which the Church has wrought, there has been a steady movement of reform, which it has inspired. Christianity has been in reality the great reforming force of our civilization.

III.

You may then ask, If Christianity has been such a reforming force in civilization, why has it not accomplished more; why are there so many reforms still to be out-wrought? It can be said, in extenuation of the slow rate of progress under Christianity, in the first place, that progress is necessarily slow. He who knows aught of history will never expect rapid improvement in mankind. The world has always moved forward one step at a time. Moreover, slow as the natural action of reform always is, in the present case, it was made slower by the material on which Christianity had to work. The Roman Empire was fatally sick. No power could have availed to stay the gradual dissolution of the old order. Christianity seemed to have the impossible task of trying to rejuvenate a worn-out social constitution. Its real task proved to be that of holding off death from the Roman Empire, and of so far purifying and invigorating its constitution as to enable it, in its extreme old age and at the point of death, to

beget a son and heir, in marriage with Teutonic Barbarianism.

What a task was then before it ! It had to train this new humanity, born of an imbecile father and of a savage mother, the heir at once of the vices of Rome and of the savageries of the Teutons ! It had to break in these young rough races, and to civilize and Christianize them. Do you wonder that the progress of reform for a thousand years was almost imperceptible ?

Nor was this all. The new reforming force was early turned aside, from its true task of social reconstruction, into the subtilities of metaphysics and the ambitions of priestcraft. The currents of the river of the water of life were sluiced off, from the great fields of human affairs, into theological and ecclesiastical gardens ; leaving whole tracts of the secular world dry and lifeless, that doctors might grow prize specimens of dogma, and monks might turn pretty little mills, grinding out churchly gewgaws. The very success of the early Church, as a visible organization, proved its failure as an invisible force of reform. From the day on which the dream of capturing the State possessed the men of the Church, its energy of social reform flagged and failed. Its ethical energy went to fat, in the building up of a vast body of sleek and shining secularity.

For one brief century, the world knew what the reforming force of true Christianity was. While

men followed Jesus, as the Master of Life, joyously trusting a Heavenly Father and earnestly loving their human brothers, the world leaped forward with great strides, in a progress never seen before nor since. This was the age when mighty reforms were wrought in Rome. The energies of moral enthusiasm in the new religion poured themselves into the task of building up a true order of society on earth. If that rate of progress could have continued, who can say how low down above our earth the Kingdom of Heaven would have brooded in our day?

"Precisely," say the critics of Christianity, "Christianity's force of moral reform has, as we have charged, exhausted itself. Its religious ideas have gone to seed, and in their falling away, as the dead fruit of a past age, the moral power and social enthusiasm are drying up in the old stock."

Concerning the exhaustion of the ideas of Christianity, I shall have somewhat to say hereafter. As I close this morning, let me fairly face the question whether the moral energies of Christianity show signs of exhaustion. Admitting frankly, as I have done, that Christianity has, in a sense, failed, I must affirm that this failure seems to me due, mainly, to Christianity's unfaithfulness to its own ideal. As, under the influence of our age, it is returning to its original ideas, its original ideals are re-awakening; and as Christianity becomes once more the re-

ligion of Jesus Christ, it will become once more his force of social reform in the world.

It is even now thus re-awakening. The signs of this renaissance are on every hand. When was Christianity ever more alive to the real problems of society—save in the first creative epoch of its history? Where is it not, to-day, turning from ecclesiastical and theological tasks to the labors of social reform? The churches feel themselves ashamed not to be known as working churches. They are so busy with schools and philanthropic societies of all sorts that one fears for the old culture of personal character. Look outside the churches, and ask yourselves—What are the moving forces in the great philanthropies of our age? Who are the active workers in these reforms? Hosts of men and women, doubtless, who do not call themselves Christians—all the more honor to them! Still, it remains to be acknowledged that the great mass of quiet, devoted toilers among the poor and the suffering, the men and the women who are pulling the stroke-oar in most philanthropic societies, are those who may be found to-day worshipping in our churches. What are the forces of thought and aspiration which are the motors in modern philanthropy? Chiefly the ideas and the ideals of Christianity. I was studying, a-while since, a peculiar specialty in philanthropy—that of Prison Reform; and I was surprised to find, cropping out everywhere, the tokens

that the men who are making it the wonderful success that it is becoming—a veritable moral miracle—were simple-hearted followers of Jesus Christ, and that their faith and hope in such a discouraging task were drawn from the very soul of Jesus. Fancy, if you can, what our world would be to-day with the reforming forces of Christianity eliminated ! Further, be it remembered, the time seems coming ripe for the rapid development of the slow preparation for social regeneration which Christianity has been so long making. Through generations and centuries, Christianity has been inspiring in men the personal character which is the real preparation for social reform. After the pattern of its Master, it has been laying hold of individual souls, one by one ; breathing into them the love of God and of man ; and waiting for the slow compact of these Christian hearts to create a force of public sentiment, a power of social conscience, which might change the world. This preliminary work has been well wrought ; and now, in every sphere of society, this force of Christian public sentiment is acting as a power of reform.

It is winter now around us, and we think that all is cold and dead in nature ; but, day by day, as the sun gains power, the ground is drinking in the fructifying beams ; the hold of the frost-king is relaxing ; the sap is liquifying in the trees, and all things are making ready for the start that will come soon, on some bright, warm day in May ; when each hour

will force everything forward, magically ; when the hard, round knobs on the twigs of the tree will open, and the tender, dainty leaflets will peep into the air, and shake out their exquisite lace-work in soft, dreamy folds ; taking on color, and spreading in form each day and each hour, until, lo ! in a week we are in summer ! That is the change which is coming on society, in the spring-time of Christianity. The sun of truth is mounting in the skies, and its heavenly beams are falling, soft and warm, into the bosom of the Church ; starting within its veins the old life ; pulsing the early, free, simple religion of Jesus, with its strength of faith and joy of hope, once more through the souls of men. Its summer is at hand.

So far from the reforming force of Christianity having become exhausted, the world has never yet begun to realize the latent power which is stored in a true Christianity. A great German philosopher wrote : “ Christianity yet carries in its breast a renovating power of which we have no conception. Hitherto it has only acted on individuals, and through them on the State, indirectly. But whoever can appreciate its power, whether he be a mere believer or an independent thinker, will confess that it is destined some day to become the inner, organizing power of the State ; and then it will reveal itself to the world in all the depths of its ideas, and

the full richness of its blessings." * Such an impartial critic as Mr. Matthew Arnold writes : " This gospel (the original gospel of Christ) . . . was the ideal of popular hope and longing, an immense renovation and transformation of things—the kingdom of God. . . . Whoever reverts to it reverts to the primitive gospel ; which is the good news of an immense renovation and transformation of this world by the establishment of what the sermon on the mount calls—' God's Righteousness and Kingdom.' " †

I stood the other day upon the banks of Niagara, and thought I saw, as I stood there, a pretty little lumber-mill, turning its slow, lazy wheels from the force of the rapids ; cutting a few hundred logs per diem ; its owner smilingly assuring me that he was working Niagara for all that it was worth as a motor ; while, in my thought, I seemed to see an Edison standing by, figuring how he could utilize that tremendous force with which he might light and heat New York, and drive its whole machinery of industry. By the side of a moral Niagara I seem to see a pretty ecclesiastical structure, dipping its slow, cumbrous wheels into the rapids of the River of the Water of Life, driving the mechanism which turns out lovely altars and precious antependiums, abnormal experiences of religiousness, and stiff pat-

* Immanuel Fichte : quoted in " Property and Progress," p. xxxvi.

† " Essays on Church and Religion " : p. 170.

terns of men and women made up so snug for Heaven that they are too nice for earth ; the priests who run this establishment assuring me that they are utilizing to the full the forces from which they draw, and that if we want more work done, we must order up another Niagara. And all the time who does not know that there is here a force of reform, in the ideas and ideals, the convictions and aspirations of Christianity, sufficient to shake the earth, to overthrow every existing wrong, to swallow up every obstruction and to recreate the world in a new order, wherein dwelleth righteousness—if we only learned how to turn its mighty energies into practical channels.

If these, then, be the facts concerning Christianity, there is a slight mistake in the impression which its critics would leave—the impression that there is nothing vital left in Christianity. Let us not be in too much of a hurry in following these critics into such rash conclusions. Have they a worthy substitute for Christianity? Have they unearthed an institution that holds to a greater extent the promise and potency of all social regeneration? Have they found the religion which is actually leading the races under its sway more rapidly forward towards the human ideals? My advice to you, young men, is—Don't step out of Christianity until you have something better to step into.

III.

THE TRINITY AND ORIGINAL SIN.

“That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.”—I. Tim. vi: 1.

THE writer of this epistle gave a direction looking to this end. Many good people would, just now, give another direction, with this same end in view. They would, if they had the power, order the suppression of a certain lecturer—“That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.” Most thorough blasphemy, to devout ears, sound the Sunday talks of this popular orator. The doctrines of the churches furnish the targets for his keenest shafts of sarcasm. Those arrows are feathered with an audacious and irreverent wit. Every joke seems to go forth barbed with a blasphemy.

On the other hand, this lecturer possibly feels that he is aiming his stalwart bow straight at the heart of most real blasphemies. He may well reply to his critics—The true blasphemies are these irrational and immoral doctrines which the Church has throned above the human soul, demanding for them the homage of reason and conscience.

This is what very many men outside the churches are feeling and saying to-day; and, because of this,

they are excusing the gross irreverence of this speaker. Hosts of young men, undoubtedly, feel less shocked than they otherwise would do by his language, because their own inner natures have revolted so strongly from the orthodox doctrines, which have seemed to them utterly unbelievable affirmations concerning a just and good God. And so they have been disposed to join in the chorus of condemnation everywhere heard—Down with them, down with them, even to the ground, “That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.”

Here, as everywhere, the truth lies midway between the extremes, and in each of these counter-charges of blasphemy, we may recognize a somewhat that is valid. For one, I feel keenly the irreverence of the language of this lecturer, but I also feel keenly the irreverence of the forms in which our orthodox doctrines are popularly presented. That which keeps me alike from mere denunciation of his work and from blindly following him in his utter renunciation of the great Christian doctrines is that, while I see with him the revolting forms of some of them, I can see through the outer garb of these ancient dogmas somewhat of their true inner form and meaning, which he seems not to perceive.

I want to help you, young men, to feel your way to this just mean, so that you may not confuse your own moral and intellectual judgments, by trying to

accept these dogmas against the protest of reason and conscience, and so that you may not rush to the other extreme, after such a leader, and throw utterly away the venerable doctrines of Christianity.

Let it be frankly conceded, from our standpoint within the Church, that the doctrines of Christianity present, in their traditional forms, fair objects of denunciation. It requires no great learning to discover, in the material which has been woven into their outward bodies, relics of very ancient pagan superstitions and fragments of the flamboyant metaphysics of Mediæval scholasticism. It is not our fault if our eyes are open to the fatal defects of many of the traditional formulas, as interpretations of the Infinite and Eternal Mysteries to the mind of an age whose conscience has been educated by eighteen centuries of Christian aspiration, and whose reason has been illumined by a knowledge of nature that is unprecedented in history.

What an utterly baffling arithmetical puzzle seems the conventional dogma of the Trinity! What a moral monster is the God of Calvinism! How fiendishly wicked are the decrees which predestine the mass of men to unescapable damnation! How thoroughly commercial is the traditional notion of the atonement! How frightful, beyond the dream of insanity, is the vision of the orthodox hell! How thoroughly unethical is the ordinary statement of salvation by faith! These are the dogmas against

which the sharp arrows of a merciless wit are levelled, fair and straight. They deserve, in their popular forms, every blow which they receive. It is high time, indeed, that the Christian church had learned that great saying of the Apostle whom the church brings before us to-day—"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." These childish things of child-ages need to be put away; and if, like children of a smaller growth, we cling to our mind's images, crying when bidden to give them up, it is no wonder that any strong, rough hand should come in and tear them from our grasp. But, would it not be wiser to hold before the eyes of the crying children some new and nobler images of truth, in the sight of which we should drop our old forms and hold out our hands for the new ones?

My fault with this lecturer is, not that he knocks down so rudely these ancient and venerable objects of the child-mind's wonder, but that, like most mere free thinkers, he substitutes no higher symbols of those most real and solemn mysteries for which they have answered well enough in the childhood of man, out from which the race is but beginning to pass. He leaves the impression on the minds of young men that there is nothing left of theology at all, that it has all gone to pieces under his attacks. To listen to him, one would fancy that the dogmas

of Christianity were only empty bubbles, thrown into the air by the children of the earth ; seemingly very real and solid, but breaking into nothingness as they touch the surface of some hard fact.

Whereas, the truth is that, with all their defects and imperfections, they are by no means hollow forms of metaphysic vapor, but most substantial realities of nature. Their substance consists of facts of nature and of humanity, which they try to clothe in an outward and visible form to the soul of man. If the Infinite and Eternal Mysteries can no longer be stowed away in these once well-fitting clothes, and so, refusing to present themselves to us unclothed, remain in the dark, inner rooms of consciousness, it by no means follows that they are non-existent, utter unrealities, but simply that they are waiting for a new suit of clothes in order to come forth into the daylight and be recognized by the mind of man. The grave and earnest men who, in the ages gone by, fashioned the dogmas of the Christian Church, did not manufacture the problems which they tried to solve. They found those problems before them—problems which they could not ignore or escape ; which insistently thrust urgent questionings beneath their very faces. They, therefore, did their best to state and solve those problems, in the thought and language of their day ; and their answers lie in the historic dogmas of Christianity.

Were those problems which they faced unreal? Have those mysteries evaporated into thin air, in the dry light of our age? Do we go through life finding no such perplexing problems before us? Is there no riddle of the Sphinx put to our souls—solemn, awful, weighted with far-reaching consequences? He who answers lightly to such questions writes himself down another Shallow.

These problems are before us as they were before our fathers. The old *nebulæ* loom still vague and wonderful in the skies above us. The old secrets are unearthed wherever we scratch the surface of our knowledge of the world in which we live. To declare that you know nothing of them is simply to say, to the old Sphinx's riddle—I give it up. And you cannot thus easily give it up. The fascination of the riddle is on you, if you be a thinking man, as it was upon your fathers. You are persuaded, if you have trust in the sanity of Creation, that the riddle is not insoluble. You see that men are finding out hints of its meaning, are getting on the track of the answer. You know that all our knowledge is the knowledge of somewhat concerning these problems—conceived in the forms of the thought, and expressed in the terms of the language of our own age. You see that the dogmas of science are but the nineteenth century statements of the very same mysteries which our fathers stated in the dogmas of theology; a new philosophy and a new ter-

minology, but an old substance of fact; identical problems expressed, then in terms of metaphysics, and now in terms of physics and of ethics. And, seeing this, the seeming blasphemy of the old enunciation will not tempt you to any blasphemy of denunciation. You will strip away the popular forms of dogma, but only to get at the core of doctrine within them. You will reject the ancient formulas, if need be, but you will hold on to the ancient faiths.

Let me now illustrate this general position of a reverent reason in the case of some of the leading dogmas of Christianity.

I.

The popular notion of the Trinity is undoubtedly utterly grotesque—a sort of *Mid Summer Night's Dream* of a Divine Being, at once one and three; of whom no conceivable thought can be formed better than that which the popular imagination of India cast into the monstrous form of an image with three heads. The average man can have no thought at all concerning this dogma, unless it be that of a veritable triad of deities, such as Mr. Arnold has so vividly scathed; and the belief in three gods is a distinct heresy, against which the Athanasian creed terrifically warns us. The average man can have no conceivable thought of this dogma, for the simple reason that the dogma itself is a pure

piece of metaphysic—a sublime philosophic imagination, which is expressed, of necessity, in terms of philosophy, *i.e.*, in a “tongue not understood of the people.” Dean Stanley has clearly shown us that the terms used in the Athanasian creed, as we now use them, have directly transposed their original and true philosophic meaning; that they mean, to men to-day, precisely the opposite of that which they meant to the framer of this creed, who, whatever his name, was not Athanasius.

But, is the dogma of the Trinity an utter absurdity; an ingenious bubble blown by theologians, having no solidity; a figment of the fancy, expressing no reality? Before leaping rashly to this conclusion, my free-thinking friend, pause a moment to remember that this curious dogma is no invention of Mediæval schoolmen or of early Christian priests. It existed long before Christianity. It is found in many ancient religions, and those the most wonderful religions of antiquity. The wise men of Egypt fashioned this dogma, as a symbol—an imaginative expression—of the mystery in the Divine Being upon which they came through all their studies of nature. The profound thinkers of India, musing over the same mystery of the Divine Being, as it presented itself to them, fashioned the very same conception. A doctrine of the Divine Trinity in Unity is the underlying idea of the venerable religion of the Brahmans. Christianity, in fact, prob-

ably owes this doctrine to the influence of Egyptian speculation, and possibly to the indirect influence of Hindoo speculation, in the early church. Our dogma was born in Alexandria. It was nurtured at the hands of men who knew, in all probability, of this thought from the far East; through whom the early Christians learned, unconsciously, the mystic lore of India. This in no wise affects the truth of the Christian doctrine. It plainly pleased Providence to grow this body of philosophy, in which the soul of Christian doctrine should dwell, out of the thought of the great intellectual races of antiquity, as was most honoring to that high truth.

If this doctrine be an utterly unsubstantial notion, then the deepest thinking of the human mind, in different lands and ages, is faulted. Are we, moderns, with all our brand-new learning, ready yet to write "obsolete" under a thought which has been thus held by the greatest races of earth?

When we inquire what were the phenomena of nature and of the human soul which led the ancients to this strange thought, we find that they were facts which exist still to-day; facts which we come upon everywhere, when we go below the surface of knowledge; facts which suggest to us still the very same idea which they suggested to the ancients; facts for which we can find no better expression in this nineteenth century than that which was found as many centuries before our era.

All nature suggests an ultimate unity. The spectroscope reveals the same elements of matter in Mars and Jupiter as those out of which our earth is builded. All forms of force are forever slipping and sliding, in a baffling play, into one another; and light and heat and electricity prove but one and the same energy. The stars of heaven sweep through their majestic orbits, under the leash of the law which draws the curve of the apple, as it falls from the tree. One type of structure runs through all the varied organisms of earth. Man's body is that of the dog, set upon its hind legs and with its fore paws turned into hands; and the dog is a tree moving about. The oyster, on your table to-day, presents you with nature's rough draft of the internal organs which you carry within you. This is the fascinating mystery of unity which all nature discloses. This unity is an expression of the Divine Being. God is one.

But in this unity what a bewildering manifoldness! How infinite the changes of form which the Divine Being takes! No fixed and changeless unity is this of the Divine Being, but a unity which comprehends all multiplicity, and subsists under all variety. God is not a unit—he is unity. He is not a melody, he is the harmony of all things. The truth of Polytheism was this sense of the infinite variety of forms which the Divine Essence takes, in cloud and sea, in tree and flower, in bird and man.

Its error was in letting these forms of Divine Power separate, one from another, and all from a central unity, and then stiffen into gods many. The true philosophic thought, so saw the ancients, allowed for a variety of divine forms or masks, while holding to the conviction that all were but the changing phases of one Power, which preserved thus, beneath an infinite manifoldness, an eternal unity.

Now the number which first finds expression for this unity in variety is the number three. 'One' is the mere unit. 'Two' represents mere variety, without a bond of unity. It is the number which denotes analysis—the severing and differentiating of the primal unity. 'Three' expresses a return to a higher unity—harmony. It has variety, but that variety is not the mere separation of analysis, as is the case with 'two.' It makes a new synthesis. It is unity in a tri-unity. The child saw this of old, and the philosopher simply saw that this mystery ran through all nature, up into the mystery of the human being. He saw that life arranges itself in triads, and in combinations of triads. He saw that the possibilities of space are exhausted in a "here," "there" and "everywhere;" that the possibilities of time are exhausted in a "past," "present" and "future;" that the possibilities of individuality are exhausted in an "I," "thou" and "he;" that the possibilities of personality are exhausted in a "body," "mind" and "soul." And so, fascinated

by this secret of the inner rhythm of creation, he expressed it in a dogma of the Divine Trinity. He meant by it that the Divine Being is one substance in many persons—personæ or masks; or, as we should say now, in many forms.

And this is a clue to the doctrine of the Trinity. The manifestations of God express somewhat in His essential nature. There is, in the Infinite Being, a mystery which can only be conceived by our finite minds in a doctrine of tri-unity, such as that which is bodied in the sublime Nicene Creed. This philosophy, the noblest thought of the Divine Being which man has reached, became the body of belief which grew around that mystery of "God manifest in the flesh," which is Jesus Christ our Lord. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth." We are all therefore baptized "into the name (or revelation) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

The ancient metaphysical conception is thus lifted, in Christian thought, into a doctrine which is an expression of ethical and spiritual realities; as, feeling the varying needs of the human soul, and the mystery of the Divine Being's meeting of all these various needs, we say, in answer to the question, "What dost thou chiefly learn in these arti-

cles of thy belief?"—"First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world. Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the people of God."

Is this ancient philosophic thought of the divine unity under many forms, of a mystery of Tri-unity in God, a thought which is obsolete? Most surely not. Can you and I then find, as yet, a better expression of this mystery than that which our fathers held—when we know what they meant by their language? I trow not. A higher statement of the Trinity may be made in time to come. That time is so far before us, however, that we need not puzzle ourselves with any such problem. Meanwhile, let us be honest and modest enough to believe that, while it is easy to ridicule the superstitious notion of the Trinity, as held by many good folk in the churches, it is a task too hard for the most eloquent orator or the most brilliant critic to do away with the facts which our fathers tried to express in this dogma, or to shape a better formula for this mystery. I remember hearing the Nestor of Unitarianism—the learned and judicious Dr. Hedge—say, in a meeting of Unitarian ministers, that they had made a great mistake in throwing away this venerable symbol; that it expressed a thought which men needed still;

and that they would do well to return to a rational use of it.

II.

Let us look at another dogma of the churches—Original Sin. As it stands in our own Articles of Faith, it need trouble nobody; but it certainly is a rather uncouth and grotesque article of belief, as it appears in its best known garb. Through the eating of the forbidden fruit, our first parents “became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They, being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and that same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all posterity. * * * From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. This corruption of nature * * * is truly and properly sin. * * * It doth * * * bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal and eternal.” This is the statement of the dogma which is made in the most thorough-going of Confessions, the Westminster Confession of Faith. It looks like a far away nightmare dream to us, in the light of our day.

The Providence whom science reveals to us,

started the human race on its career along other and nobler lines. The Father whom Jesus revealed to us could never have brought into being a child dowered with such instant and complete gravitation towards evil.

It is very easy to turn such a dogma into ridicule and to crack jokes over it. But, was there no living idea within this ancient tale which still claims our respectful attention? Did our fathers manufacture the dread problem which they stated and solved, to their own satisfaction, in this dogma of original sin? Did they not find that problem facing them in the hard, stern facts of every-day life; and did they not try to state it and to solve it in the best way open to the knowledge of their age? Has that problem disappeared from the face of the earth? Is there no solid substance of reality left of this mystery, which so awed the men of the past? Has it all evaporated into thin mist, melting away into nothingness before the light of day?

Get at the core of this quaint, archaic dogma, and what do you find to have been the problem before our fathers? It was the fact that men came into being with propensities and dispositions towards evil; the fact that germs of sin lie latent in human nature, awaiting only the proper nidus to grow like weeds and to blossom in rank luxuriance. They saw that if any man were let alone, under conditions at all favoring evil, he would grow up bad.

To grow up good, the conditions most favorable to virtue needed to be found ; and then he had to be incessantly watched and unweariedly trained and disciplined. All special sin appeared to grow out of a subsoil of constitutional sinfulness. There was an organic taint in the blood.

Were our fathers wrong, in seeing such a problem before them? Not unless all experience has been a mistake, and all history has been a lie. Far back as we can follow man's thought and observation, we find him facing this mystery. All great moralists have acknowledged its reality. It has been the perplexity of philosophers, the grief of parents and the despair of reformers. To-day, amid all our blaze of light, this mystery confronts us still. Would God it had disappeared from earth ! But alas ! it is in all our homes and schools—the problem which every one, who would train a child in the way in which he should go, is forced to face. The most optimistic mind cannot ignore or evade it. The most scientific philosopher is forced to a reluctant conservatism here. Listen to Herbert Spencer, in his treatise on education : “We are not among those who believe in Lord Palmerston's dogma, that ‘all children are born good.’ On the whole, the opposite dogma, untenable as it is, seems to us less wide of the truth.” * Here, then, was a solid substance of most real fact in the problem

* “Education” : p. 164.

which our fathers faced, as we are painfully forced to confess.

Was there any approach to accuracy in their statement of the solution? The general idea which was involved in their statement of the solution was the existence and operation of a law of heredity, by which moral qualities are handed down from father to son, and by which the evil habits of an ancestor come forth in a descendent as evil tendencies. Is that an obsolete notion? On the contrary, it is a truth which our modern knowledge most strongly emphasizes. The dogma of heredity is one of the fundamental articles of belief imposed by our nineteenth-century priests of science, which a man must perforce believe, on pain of being counted an infidel. The fact of an organic transmission of qualities, physical and moral, is wholly unquestionable by us. We have reduced the problem to a science, upon which great productive businesses are based. Horticulture is but this law of heredity applied to vegetable life, and stock-raising is the same law applied to cattle. They rest securely upon the certainty that qualities live on in the "blood." When a graft is rightly made, you are sure of introducing the succulent qualities of the "Bartlett" or the "Seckle" upon the gnarled old stock of your common pear. When you have rightly mated sire and dam, you are sure of the racing qualities of your colt, or of the milking qualities of your Jersey

heifer. Introduce a vicious vein of sap or blood into the orchard or the stock farm, and you know the result.

Human character lies under the operation of the same law, though, of course, with wider margins of variation and with more numerous elements of uncertainty. Race qualities seem to defy all influences of climate, food and social environment. The Hebrew of our age repeats the profile and renews the spirit of the people whom Sennacherib portrayed on the walls of Babylon, and to whom Isaiah preached in Jerusalem. On the granite tombs of the Nile you can study, in the triumphal processions of Egyptian kings, the identical contour of the negro of to-day. It was Mrs. Jameson, I think, who tells of a visit to an old English hall, and who describes how, as she walked through its picture-gallery, where hung the portraits of lords and ladies of the noble family, through successive generations, she found herself again and again startled as though confronted by one and the same man or woman, masking under changing costumes, passing incognito under different names. The evil as well as the good of past generations lives on still in us. Those mystic builders of our bodies, the tiny blood-corpuscles, which gyrate so nimbly along our veins, weave into our tissue the threads of character which were spun out of the lusts and appetites of our ancestors. Forgotten deeds of

evil have subsoiled our constitutions with the mould out of which the fungoid growth of sin springs, rankly luxuriant. We are dowered in our birth with a capital of fleshliness, which bears a heavier rate of interest than any known in your markets. It is not simply an unfortunate child of "the Jukes," who is thus stored with potencies of passion from the deeds of the past. In varying degrees, we are all thus charged with explosive forces. The best of our ancestors had their great faults, and the worst of them had vices which were manufactories of moral dynamite. To determine the anarchism in our nature, you must measure the ages back of us and gauge the sins of the past. As you watch your lovely babe, looking so much like a cherub as she sleeps peacefully in her cradle, cooing to herself every now and then amid the dreams which light up her dimpled face with light and airy smiles, you may almost see the ghosts of her forefathers stealing out of the darkness, gliding up to her side, slipping beneath the coverlet that lies so daintily upon her, and fading away into her chubby body; possessing her beforehand with their unholy presences, soiling her innocent soul with shadows of their sins, waiting for the hour of temptation to open the citadel, and, with traitor hands, betray her into guilt. This, my light-hearted, free-thinking friend, is the awful mystery which your fathers felt, and which you

too might feel, as sensitively, would you enter into life's seriousness as deeply as did these true men of old.

But what are we to make of the historic form into which our fathers cast this general law of organic evil? That was plainly a mistake—the mistake of an age which was ignorant of the real history of man. It was the natural error of men who read their book of Genesis as a literal history, and who, mistaking a poem for a fact, saw, in the profound parable of the Hebrew sages, the journal of the original man. We have learned a story of man which shelves their crude notion of history, but which gives us no warrant to treat lightly their reasonings from the only knowledge which was open to them. Given the literal character of the tale of Genesis, as the history of the first father of the human race, and their inferences follow justly enough.

Adam's sin could not have been any mere passing evil. It introduced disorder into a perfect organism. Disorder is not measured alone by the size of the intrusion but by the delicacy of the organism intruded upon. It may need a keg of dynamite to blow up the pyramids; but a grain of sand will put a watch out of order, a speck of dust will work the human eye into torturing inflammation. Nature is homœopathic. She slays by germs which no sense can detect. Adam's sin

could not have been any mere individual sin alone. It was truly an organic wrong, a disorder introduced into a race, in the person of the first human being. In him, the unborn generations were inevitably tainted. Drop a powerful poison into a mountain spring, and it flows forth in the waters that rise from its basin, until diluted into harmlessness. Taint a seed, and the tree's fruitage is tainted. Place a leprous pair on a lonely island, and you need not go back to that island, a generation after, to learn whether its population are healthy. These things our fathers saw, and, with their notion of an original Adam, they could not but construct some such sort of a dogma of original sin.

But what of the moral character of this dogma? We are forced to answer, frankly, to our consciences, that the dogma, as thus shaped by our fathers, seems to us harsh, unjust, untrue and utterly repulsive; an outrage upon human nature and a libel upon God. Imputation of guilt from father to son is offensive, even to human law. No one sin of an Adam could have wrought such a change, as to have, at once, rendered all mankind utterly evil. No one original sin, with all possible increments through six thousand years, can justly render us, as born into the world, unknowing babes, the objects of God's wrath, but only of his infinite pity. As a matter of fact, those are the

rare exceptions among men of whom we can truly say that they are totally depraved. We, therefore, repudiate this dogma, in its extreme form. We cannot think thus of God. We cannot think thus of man. And a great load falls from our spirits, as we throw off this error.

You remind me, however, that even the core of the dogma, the law of heredity, looks very dark and cruel. We are all suffering from the sins of our ancestors. We come into being with the seeds of evil latent in us, and we fight all our lives against dispositions which others wrought into us. This is truly a dread aspect of the law of heredity. But remember, pray, that the law takes on another aspect, in the light of man's real history, and grows benignly beneficent.

The original man of history was not a perfect man, who fell from an ideal state; he was a most imperfect one, who began at once, under the education of the Divine Spirit and of Providence, to rise towards the far-off ideal of the Son of God. The human race arose, apparently, out of savage creatures. Our first fathers were hairy monsters, dwellers in caves, slightly differing from the brutes with whom they companied; like whom, they lived in promiscuity of sexes; from whom they snatched away a bare subsistence. They dowered humanity with their brute impulses and savage passions. This is the poor stock which we have

had to train towards a nobler growth. We are all removed by but a few generations from the painted warriors who followed Boadicea to the field of battle; from the Vikings who swept the sea in their dragon-prowed boats, plundering and burning, ravaging and looting the towns on which they fell like incarnate demons; and from the Druids who, on their sacred days of worship, brought their fair children, garlanded with flowers, and offered them upon a bloody altar. These be our forefathers, from whose ghostly clutches we have need to escape! Is it any wonder that humanity is still feeling the powerful action of the law of heredity, as a curse?

The redemption of this law from its dreadful aspect lies in the fact that it is working good as well as evil; that the virtues of our ancestors, as well as their vices, are handed down to us organically; that, as man grows, the law increasingly becomes a law of benediction, under which history is to be an ever advancing progress into a spiritual humanity. Man has already been gradually working the beast out of his nature, and drawing the angel down into it. Each fresh generation adds to the impetus which sends him upward towards the stars. Evil dies soon. The law of heredity wipes out the drunkard's family in three generations; while it ever adds to the forces of ascending goodness. Thus that great word of the

ancient law-giver proves true to science—"I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me ; and show mercy unto thousands, in them that love me and keep my commandments."

The obverse side of the dogma of original sin is the dogma of ultimate righteousness ; one and the same law, viewed in its beginning and in its end.

III.

Let me, as I close, affirm our true intellectual attitude towards these doctrines. Though we must reject the obsolete and archaic forms of the dogmas, whether as bodied in popular notions or in Calvinistic Confessions, we should stand reverent before the mysteries which they clothe ; content with their simpler forms, however they may puzzle us ; sure that the knowledge of the future will give more adequate expressions of these great mysteries ; and, meanwhile, waiting patiently for whatever new clothes Providence may have ordered for the old body of beliefs. To denounce antiquated forms of venerable dogmas is needful, and easy. To enounce new and better forms for these ancient mysteries is more needful, and more difficult. Destruction here is well, but reconstruction is far better. And of reconstruction the critics of Christi-

anity are very chary. The attitude of free-thought outside of the churches, towards these dogmas, is one of impatience and utter unbelief. The attitude of free-thought, inside the churches, is one of patient waiting for the old faiths in new forms. Judge ye, young men, which is the wiser.

Let me also press home upon you the moral bearings of these two great articles of our fathers' belief. Do not under-estimate the task which is before you, if you want to become, in the spirit, a son of God. You have to outgrow the savage man, whose son you are in the flesh. The pull backward and downward comes from a long line of brutal and beastly humanity behind you. You will need to be in dead earnest if you are to win. What will become of the amateur Christian, who plays at saving his soul? But do not be discouraged, my brother. If the past is a drag, the future is an inspiration. If the old Adam grips your flesh, the new Adam breathes in your spirit. If the law of heredity works against you, it works for you as well. There were noble fathers and saintly mothers back of you. Their prayers are whispering in your aspirations. God was before the Devil and He will outlive him.

There is that which was more original than original sin—the original goodness which was in God's thought of man, in God's thought of you. This will come out upon you, at the end, if you are working together with God. Live purely and justly,

and you shall save your own soul, and help to stock the race with power unto its salvation. And if you need authority, guidance and inspiration for such a life, behold it all, in a Heavenly Father over you, the source and ground of all goodness; in a Beloved Son, the pattern and example of all goodness; in a Holy Spirit, breathing within you daily impulses towards all goodness!

IV.

ELECTION AND ATONEMENT.

“He maketh the doctrine of knowledge appear as the light.”
—Ecclesiasticus xxiv : 27.

JESUS, the Son of Sirach, affirmed of the living God that “He maketh the doctrine of knowledge appear as the light.” Man may make the doctrine not of knowledge appear as the darkness. He has often enough done so. In the ages when there was little true understanding of the works and ways of the Most High, man could not frame doctrines according to knowledge. The simple doctrines of Scripture, which he then fashioned into elaborate dogmas of speculation, could not but appear in darkened forms, beclouding the reason and shadowing deeply the conscience. Even such great doctrines as the Catholic Creeds have worthily stated, must still shape themselves, in the minds of ignorant men, after grotesque fashions. As the Eternal Spirit of Truth is guiding man onward into truth, revealing to him fuller knowledge and larger light, this Holy Ghost, who teacheth us all things, is thus leading the old beliefs of man into forms correspondent with the veritable facts of nature, and with the real

laws of life. In these new and higher forms, the old beliefs are defining themselves more clearly into realities before the mind, and are taking on a graciousness in which their old repulsiveness to the conscience disappears, and thus it shall come true that "He maketh the doctrine of knowledge appear as the light."

That which the One True Teacher is thus doing with mankind, the tutor of individual souls may well strive, in his bungling way, to do with those who look to him for guidance. Conscious of my faultiness in doing such a delicate task, but feeling the responsibility upon me of trying my best to do it for those who follow me, as one of the Great Master's underteachers, I return to-day to the endeavor to make our old doctrines disclose, to those who are tempted to throw them utterly away, hints of the new forms which they seem to be taking in human thought; forms accordant with the new knowledge given unto man; in which they will ere long appear as the light, though that light may be as yet but the dawning of the day.

I.

Let us first consider the dogma of Election. Our own 17th Article of Religion thus speaks on this subject. "Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly de-

creed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor."

This is, as any one who knows aught of the religious controversy on this point, at once perceives, couched in very cautious language. It avoids most of the difficulties that are raised by such a belief, concerning man's free will. It affirms nothing whatever of the necessary antithesis of a Divine choice of some, *i.e.*, a Divine rejection of others. It was in fact purposely designed to express a very moderate Calvinism, and to include, as far as possible, those who scrupled at this doctrine altogether. To know what this dogma was really capable of becoming, we need to refer to the one Confession of Faith whose infamy it is to have no equal in the remorseless logic which stops at no folly and shrinks from no blasphemy in the name of a Christian theology. The Westminster Confession of Faith is the very petrification of religion in dogma. It is Christianity suffering a complete ossification of the heart. Let us hear what it has to say upon this subject.

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestined and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain

and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of His glorious grace.

* * * The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice. * * * The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in His Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel."

Now consider what such a dogma really means. It means that the Infinite and Eternal Being, Whom

we worship as God, in thinking out, in His own mind, the creation of a race of human beings, deliberately conceived the plan of singling forth certain individuals of this race, as those whom he would have live forever in happiness ; and of, as deliberately, remanding the entire mass of the race, with these exceptions, to a death-in-life of inconceivable horror, to a conscious existence, amid utmost woes, which should run on forever. It means that He did this, not as having in vision any special worthiness of the certain selected ones of earth, which drew towards them His affection and made them the hopeful subjects of His educating care, but as having no apparent reason whatever for this action, no principle of selection except that it pleased Him to thus pick out these favored ones. It means that He has been, with unhesitating firmness, bringing myriads of human beings into existence every year, of whom all, save a certain elect few, have had no possible chance of winning an eternal heaven or of escaping an endless hell ; having been fore-ordained to their fate with the inexorableness of omnipotent decrees. It means that upon these special few, whom He chose to save, He has ever poured His favors, predetermining their parentage and ordering the circumstances of their lives so as to carry out His plans ; heaping on them the riches of His grace to insure their salvation ; while the fates of all the rest were left to take care of themselves, or were

even assigned so as to secure their growing up in evil ; His sun of truth not shining on their minds, His dew of grace not falling on their souls. It means that one found in this mass of rejected humanity, whatever saintly virtues he might achieve despite of the Divine decrees, found no door open for him into heaven—not even a back door, through which he might steal, while the Most High, as Paul said, “winked ;” though the veriest brute and beast, who chanced to be one of the favorites of Heaven, might wallow in the gutter all his days and then march straight to the central gate of the Celestial City and pass unchallenged in. All this is what this dogma necessarily means ; and meaning this, as a revelation made by the Christian Church of the Infinite and Eternal God, it is a blasphemy not easily outdone by the most sacrilegious of infidels. Such a dogma outrages every instinct of humanity, every principle of justice. It thrones above creation a veritable monster, a Power whom we can readily enough hate but whom no one ought to love.

We do not need any labored argument to prove to our reason and to our conscience that this God is not our God—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We hear the Son, who was ever in the bosom of the Father, sighing—“Oh ! righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee ; but I have known Thee.”

Is it any wonder that an audacious wit should launch its barbed shafts against such a blasphemous caricature of the Divine Being ; that the iconoclast should march straight up to this horrible idol of a diseased fancy, and with sledge-hammer blows pound it to pieces ?

In this very city, within a mile of this place, on a Sunday morning, not a hundred years ago, in a great church thronged with well-to-do people, a popular preacher depicted unctuously the good things of life which his wealthy hearers enjoyed, and then—as though somewhat rebuked at the picture of fortune's favorites, who sat thus serenely happy while all around them were hosts of their fellow beings, whose homes were dark tenements, whose feasts were crusts, whose lot was trial, whose manhood found no chance to grow in noble and lovely forms—the preacher paused, and said : “ Have you a right to enjoy such crowding favors ? Yes, my brethren, for are you not the elect of the Lord ? ” Into this morality of human selfishness does the dogma of Divine election, as traditionally stated, logically run. Thank God that this awful vision is fading out of the human mind !

Is it to leave no residuum of truth ? Is it another bubble of the theologians—only by no means a pretty one, but rather a most frightfully ugly one ? Has it no substance of reality ? Was there no actual problem before the souls of our fathers, in the

hard, stern facts of life which they tried to state and to solve, in the thought and language of their day? May we fling away the inner doctrine with the dogma which seems so thoroughly unbelievable?

Before we leap to this conclusion, let us pause and ask ourselves a few questions. Did this idea of a Divine Election originate with Mediæval schoolmen or with early Christian priests? On the contrary, in one form or another, it long antedated Christianity. Christianity owes it to Paul, and Paul learned it of the ancient Hebrew prophets. Other races have developed the same general idea. Centuries ago, when Mahomet went forth preaching a new religion, it was the fascinating mystery of this thought which, as an absolute belief, gave to him and to his followers their well-nigh miraculous power. The ancient Greeks brooded over the problem giving rise to it, and their immortal tragedies, one of which some of you have lately seen revived upon the stage in our land, grew around this mystery. In the dim distances of Hindoo antiquity, we can trace the sages of India facing this same problem, and seeing the same central idea arise out of it.

What, then, was the actual problem which our fathers confronted, when they fashioned this dogma? Man seemed to them as nothing before the Infinite Power in Nature. What were all his puny powers over against this omnipotence, which dictated terms

of existence to him, from the thunder of the storm cloud, from the roar of the ocean waves beating on the rocky shore, from the yawning chasm of the earthquake, from the withering heat of the summer sun?

This omnipotent power which *could* make or mar his life, without his being able to stay its hand, plainly *was* making or marring the life of every individual; determining, without his being called into council and before he drew breath, the formative conditions of his career. No man was asked where he would be born, or of whom he would be born. No man had a chance of expressing his own views as to his make-up in body, mind or soul. Each man found himself, on wakening into consciousness, practically made up; stocked beforehand with physical, mental and moral qualities; having a body full of disease or buoyant with health; a mind flabby and heavy or instinct with vigor, springing to all high thought; a soul steeped in the senses or at home in the heavens. Each man found his situation in life, his vocation, his creed, his companions, everything that told most mightily upon his destiny, all awaiting him as he came, a sleeping babe, into this world—prepared beforehand for him by a power against which he might rebel but must rebel in vain. Each man found himself thus fore-ordained to be what he was—elected somehow, by some power, to the destiny which awaited him.

The Eastern never stayed in mediate agents or in second causes. He pressed right through all instrumentalities to the original Power—God. He said, therefore, "God has chosen me to this lot, this mission," and became a thorough-going fatalist. The Hebrew mind had its special form of this general Eastern conception, the thought of God as Will; and, as summing up the whole matter, the Israelite said: "God wills it." These were the thoughts, borne in upon the minds of men in the past, which formed the core of the problem.

Has this problem evaporated from our earthly life to-day? On the contrary, does not all deep and earnest thinking face the same facts which shaped this thought of old? All around us are these mysterious facts to-day—the perpetual puzzle of life. One man finds health, intelligence, character, wealth, every good thing prepared beforehand for him; another man, born at the same hour of the same day, in the same land and city and street, finds disease, stupidity, vice, crime and poverty, every bad gift awaiting him in the home into which he is born. One man is plainly destined to honor and happiness. Another is, as plainly, destined to dishonor and misery. One nation finds itself on a hard and rock-bound coast, in a savage climate, where it has to fight with the elements for standing room, and tug at the breasts of Mother Earth for a few scanty drops of nourishment; and the thews of

a noble manhood are thus exercised of necessity, and the nation grows heroically strong. Another nation finds itself cradled in the soft lap of a land whose face smiles in a perpetual summer; lulled to sleep by the delicious languor of every voice of nature; its food dropping into its mouth from the trees which blossom all the year round, and from the gardens which grow as if by magic; and a race of lotus-eaters dream life away in idleness, loafing, but never inviting their souls. Go where you will, this fact confronts you. A higher power than man fore-ordains him to his lot, his nature, his mission, and his fate, by decrees which he can as little stay as good King Knut could stay the waves of the sea. In the homely image which so powerfully impressed the imagination of the ancient Hebrews, even thus does the potter have absolute power over the clay.

Here, then, we find ourselves face to face, in the nineteenth century, with the identical problem which confronted our forefathers so long ago—a mystery from which we cannot escape by closing our Bibles and repudiating the dogma of the Church. It is in actual life. It runs through the whole story of life. Some power is exercising a selection among all living things, from the grasses up to man; ordaining one germ to life and remanding another germ to death; picking out one race for preservation and letting another race be crowded out of ex-

istence ; choosing, by some decree, whom it will save and whom it will allow to be destroyed ; a mystic, mighty force, before which everything succumbs ; the force which is directing the whole movement of life, the history of earth. Science has so clearly recognized this fact, and has so plainly perceived that it is the determining factor in all life, that it has framed its dogma of natural selection. And thus our nineteenth-century wisdom places over against the Divine Election, in which our fathers believed, a Natural Selection, in which we, their children, believe. Whether we call that choosing out an Election or a Selection, whether we call the power thus choosing, God or Nature, we face one and the same mysterious reality.

I am not merely rolling an unbearable burden off from the Bible upon Nature, and stopping the mouths of objectors against the Church's doctrine, by pointing to this doctrine in the creed of science. With the fashion, once much in vogue, of thus answering critics of Christianity, I have little sympathy. Such reasonings merely transfer the difficulty which puzzled men from one sphere to another. It meets one difficulty to faith by another and a greater difficulty. I would turn you thus back upon Nature because Nature holds out the key to this difficult problem. Our little hands cannot turn the mighty lock of this world-old problem, but, as we fumble in the wards, we can feel that the key

fits. And one can wait whole aeons, if need be, in patience, for the interpretation of Nature, when once thoroughly persuaded that there is an interpretation, and that he has hold of the clue out into the light.

Nature selects her races not out of arbitrariness but because they are fitted for her purpose. That purpose is not the happiness of her favorites but the progress of her whole family. The races that are fit to survive do survive ; and thus we have the scientific doctrine of the survival of the fittest. And the "fittest" does not merely mean the best adapted to the special conditions of the contending races; it means, in the long run, the best adapted to carry the organic ascent of life higher. Thus, out of this harsh process of selection, under which the strong succeed and the weak go to the wall, it turns out that the type of life advances. Thus life has reached to man, and thus man is reaching on, slowly, to a nobler humanity. When we discern this secret of hard old Mother Nature, we seem to see a smile break forth over her stern face, and we know that there is a benediction in her heart.

And thus we turn back to the old Bible, where the Church found her doctrine of a Divine Election, to see that it too was in reality just such a choice, not of arbitrariness but of reason, not of favoritism but of a just and loving care for the good of the whole family of God. The Divine Election of Is-

rael, concerning which the prophets spake, was a choice of Israel, not to a private privilege but to a universal service ; a fore-ordination, not to a selfish enjoyment but to an unselfish ministry ; an endowment of one people, not with a monopoly but with a trust. Israel was chosen and called to be the means of bringing in the Gentiles to the knowledge of God and to the life of His children. When we turn to the New Testament, we find that the Divine Election therein preached is not an election of certain individuals, as the objects on whom the love of God might rest, but an election of certain individuals as the means through whom the love of God might reach to all the world. The elect are not the petted favorites of the Eternal, but His trusted servants ; singled out for a training which should fit them to carry on the gracious purposes of the good King's government. They are saved out of sin that they may be the chosen means of saving mankind, the whole human race, here and hereafter. Read St. Paul carefully and you will find that this is what he means ; and, finding this, a great light will break in upon your mind, and you will perceive that at the core of even such an awful dogma as our forefathers fashioned, when you strip off the accretions of superstition, there was a doctrine sweet and wholesome, which we need be in no haste to cast away.

II.

Let us look at another great doctrine of the Christian Church, the doctrine of the Atonement, which, in the form commonly held, is undoubtedly very offensive to the reason and the conscience ; as is proven by the continual protests that have been made against it in the churches, through successive generations, and by the ever-renewing effort to re-state it in a less objectionable shape.

The actual statements of most of the great formularies upon this subject are singularly reticent and cautious. Our own Articles of Belief are so worded as to minimize the difficulty to the modern mind. Article XV preserves, almost unchanged, the simple language of Scripture: "He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself, once made, should take away the sins of the world." Article XXXI assumes a more scholastic tone: "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual ; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone." There is here in the word "satisfaction," an unscriptural thought, a root out of which naturally grows a fresh shoot of Pagan superstition rather than a true Christian doctrine ; but, compared with the bald forms which this dogma takes

in the lips of preachers and under the pens of theologians, this Article is comfortably guarded and helpfully general. The reference in the last sentence of the Article to the Roman dogma of the Mass, gives us the standpoint from which we are to interpret its statement that "there is none other satisfaction for sin." This clause is a protest against the idea that the Mass is a sacrifice for sins.

Even the Westminster Confession is uniquely moderate upon this doctrine. It does indeed affirm, as the central thought of the Atonement, the very ideas which hold the pith of all the offence which it has caused; but it fails to develop those ideas, in its usual rigid logic, to a *reductio ad absurdum*. "The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him." There is here the legal conception of the sacrifice of Jesus, the scriptural figure of a ransom or a buying, applied unscripturally to "an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven," and the limitation of the benefits of the sacrifice to the elect. This formula undoubtedly seems to present the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice as a quit-claim under the law, as a commercial transaction, and

as a limited atonement—the three offensive features which, in the popular theology, take on such dreadful shapes at times.

The popular theology thus presents this dogma. Man stands guilty before the Court of the Eternal Justice. He has broken the laws of life. Those laws entail a penalty. That penalty is death. That death, however, means the dying out of the spiritual nature, while the intellectual and physical natures (the latter of course in the refined form of the resurrection body) live on forever, under punishment in hell. God wishes to save men. He does not feel free, however, to do so, as an earthly father would do, immediately upon his child's repentance. He is a King, who is under the restraint of His own laws, which must be kept intact to the letter. Some one must die, according to the penalty prescribed. A substitute may die, and thus guilty men may go free. The Eternal Son offers Himself as this substitute, descends to earth, bodies Himself in a man and suffers death. This death is not the eternal death incurred, but, the person being an Infinite One, his death is an infinite suffering, and thus its quality makes it equivalent to the quantity of suffering prescribed, and is accepted as a legal discharge of the law in full. Man is therefore released from all claims of the law; the divine justice is satisfied; mercy has room to show itself, and God forgives His child.

This statement presents, as you will all recognize, the substantial features of the orthodox dogma of the Atonement, as popularly held, without exaggeration or overcoloring. Is it any wonder that against the intellectual folly of such a notion the shafts of a stinging satire are levelled, or that against its moral offensiveness the hot bolts of indignation are hurled by the critics of Christianity? How utterly indefensible would be such an action of an earthly ruler, before a human court! How wretched would seem the quibblings by which a like substitution on the part of a man would have to be defended! How all the highest instincts of justice would rise up in outraged protest against such a wrong! What a travesty of love such a shift would appear, when seriously proposed as the means whereby a royal father might feel free to forgive his sinning child!

What would we think of an earthly law-giver and judge, who made such a fetich of the law which he himself had decreed, that he could not consent to modify or relax its terms and remit the penalty due for comparatively trivial offences, committed under the most powerful stress of circumstances, no matter how bitterly repented? What would we think of a human king and father who insisted upon the death of his son, because his word had been passed that such a punishment should follow any violation of a most severe code, a code that was impossible of strict fulfilment, and that had not been even made

known to all his family; and who then sought to find a reconciliation for the conflicting claims of his justice and his love by accepting the offered death of an elder son in his place? True, as some of our theologians tell us, history records such actions on the part of men; only, as these theologians do not see, mankind abhors those men for their unnatural severity; and abhors them all the more because their offences were cloaked under the high sounding name of inflexible justice.

Even out of the very heart of Puritanism, in the person of its noblest hero, human nature rises up to condemn such justice. George Fox tells in his journal, that, when he was at one time lying in prison, "a friend went to Oliver Cromwell, then the Lord Protector of England, and offered himself, body for body, to lie in Doomsdale in my stead, if he would take him and let me have liberty; which thing so struck him that he said to his great men and council—'Which of you would do as much for me, if I was in the same condition?' And he did not accept of the friend's offer, but said he could not do it, *for that it was contrary to law.*"

What a veil of darkness has this dream of the Church drawn over the face of the Heavenly Father! Again I seem to hear that sigh of The Christ—"O, Righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee."

You may well be tempted, my young friend, to

throw utterly away this dogma of the Christian Church. But pause a moment. Tear aside the outward drapery of the dogma—the formal theory which scholastics wove around the doctrine found in Scripture, the teaching that Jesus Christ died to save man out of sin. That outward garment of human theory was woven out of the mental conceptions and moral perceptions which our forefathers inherited in their days, as their only material for fashioning any clothing for the fact which they found in the Scriptures. It was the best expression possible to them of the mystery of sacrifice which they felt faced them, not alone in their Bibles, but in nature and in human life. What was that inner mystery which was before their awed souls—a phantasm or a fact, an illusion or a reality, a bubble thrown off by the theologian or a solid substance felt by the practical man? Was that famous question of Anselm—“*Cur Deus homo*”—an idle conundrum conjured up by the schoolman, or was it a real problem before the man?

Scripture certainly presented this problem to the devout soul. The New Testament taught him to view the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for human sin, a necessity to man's salvation out of sin. It revealed the mystery of a law of sacrifice, as the means whereby human life is lifted into the divine life. The actual life of man presented to our

thoughtful forefathers this same problem. On every hand were the tokens of a mysterious law under which, and under which alone, nations, classes and individuals were redeemed from errors and wrongs, sins were put away and life was pushed upwards into higher levels.

Has this problem disappeared from before our souls? It certainly has not evaporated from the pages of our Bibles, under the dryest heat of criticism. To us, as to our fathers, the mystery of a sacrifice for man's sin, offered up by Jesus Christ, is the heart of the New Testament.

This problem has certainly not been expunged from nature, under the corrections of science. It is there far more indisputably now than it was in the old days before us. It is the heart of nature itself. It lies coiled at the core of the whole process of evolution. It holds the secret of that organic ascent of life which is carried on under the action of the stern, hard destiny, upon which we have already mused. The reprobation of races, ordained by Natural Selection, proves a mysterious sacrifice, upon which other elect races rise into higher types, lifting all life with them towards perfection; an unconscious sacrifice on the part of the mosses, which decay to make a soil for grasses; of the grasses, which turn to the mould out of which flowers spring; of the flowers, which perish that birds and beasts may find their food; of the

birds and the beasts, which die to feed a nobler life in man.

Civilization has not left this problem behind it, in the march of progress. Memorial Day reads us the secret of the mysterious law through which a nation is to be redeemed from a dreadful wrong, even so as by blood. Every problem of philanthropy tells us the secret of redressing the wrongs of a selfish society in the past, the secret of lifting labor to a higher manhood—a voluntary sacrifice on the part of the rich of somewhat of their wealth, on the part of capital of somewhat of its profits, on the part of the leisured classes of somewhat of their time.

Individual life discloses everywhere the sweep of this mysterious law of sacrifice, forever ordaining that sin shall not be put away, even in our homes, unless some innocent one suffers in true vicariousness of love. Have you never come upon this fact, my brother? Then let me take you into the confidence of one whose calling has laid bare to him the secrets of many homes.

Here is a home wherein is a wilful, wayward boy, not without generous traits and fine qualities, but, whose perversity and headlong recklessness in the wild ways of youth have wearied out the endurance of his teachers, the hope of relatives and friends, and, well nigh, the patience of a father's affection and the clings of a mother's love.

They, true to the deep instincts which are shadows in the human of the Infinite and Eternal Nature, hold on to him, despite of every renewed disappointment. They pay his bills, release him from the clutches of creditors, pull him out of the wild scrapes into which he falls, step between him and the stern arm of the law, and reach him out a helping hand, whenever he seems to be trying to make a new effort towards reformation. Well nigh broken-hearted, ashamed of their boy and feeling themselves humbled in his shame, the sunshine fades from earth, life grows beclouded at mid-day, the frost of a premature winter steals across their heads and deep lines of sorrow furrow their faces. They are the first victims of the folly of their boy. While he is flinging care to the winds, surrendering himself to the riotous impulses of his lower nature, they suffer secretly, silently. Mute martyrs of the home, they feel themselves bound upon an altar, sacrifices which his unfilial hand offers up.

We wonder, as we watch this tragedy of daily life, and rebel against the hard ordering of nature. But the years roll by; the prodigal runs his head-long career; the famine arises; the poor boy comes to himself and comes back to the dishonored home; finds a light in the window for him, and becomes at the last a new man. He has been saved by the vicarious sacrifice of his father and his mother.

There is a quiet home, in which a faithful wife and loyal daughter live, day by day, with one thought—to ward off all temptation from the husband and father, to keep him out of the company which leads him astray. Each morning when he starts down town, they seek to fortify him against the snares which may be laid for him; as, with arms thrown clingingly around him, and with anxious eyes looking up into his very soul, they make the mutely eloquent appeal of unutterable love. As the shades of evening gather, they wait for him, that they may meet him at the door and welcome him back to the hearts that have been following him with guardian prayers throughout the day, pitifully whispering, into the ear which keeps open door to all the cries of sorrow, their longings that the dear husband and father may yet be saved. That man's hope of salvation lies in this faithful, clinging affection; which is daily offering itself in sacrifice for him; which is wounded for his transgressions and is bruised for his iniquities; which is taking his sins and is carrying his sorrows. If he is ever saved, he will owe it to the working of this law of vicarious sacrifice in love. Beautiful ministry of affection! Who can watch it and not feel a renewed assurance that, if the human heart is capable of such a love, the Infinite Being, out from whom all life has issued, cannot be less faithful to His own; that

He must be the source or spring of this holy affection ; that He must be, as St. John said He was—love.

Such, my friends, in forms as varied as the relationships of life, are the most real vicarious sacrifices which our homes reveal. They are segments of the sweep of the law under which all salvation out of sin is being wrought.

A strange and solemn law, but not without a holy light breaking out of its shadows. It is not alone the prodigal boy and the intemperate husband and father who are thus saved, under this law which ordains that the innocent shall suffer with and for the guilty. Father and mother, wife and daughter are saved also. The sacrificial victims suffer a transfiguration on the altar. The fires of suffering burn out of them the dross of the lower nature. Like the fabled Phœnix, they find a new birth in their death, and, out of the earthly creatures, more glorious forms, as of the children of heaven, mount towards the skies. Selfishness and worldliness and frivolity are sublimated into spiritual qualities, in the furnace of affliction. The sufferers become the heroes and saints of actual life. Thus just and gracious are the laws of The Eternal, how dark soever they may look to us now !

I am far from attempting to fathom the mystery of the sacrificial life and death of Jesus Christ, or to clothe that mystery in a form of thought, worthy

of itself. I simply seek to turn upon that life and death the light which is reflected from this law of nature, which even to our poor, dim eyes on earth discloses a radiance as of love ineffable.

Think twice, my young friend, before you allow yourself to speak lightly of this mystery which our fathers felt, and which they tried to express in the best way open unto them ; which we, their children, feel, and must try to express in the best way open unto us. When their forms of thought offend you, so that you can no longer use them honestly, be silent, until a nobler thought is given you, wherewith to clothe this mystery ; never doubting that there is within the old dogma a doctrine most real and true, as for your fathers so for you, who, like them, do need to feel the power of the Cross of Jesus, as a power of God unto salvation. Wait patiently on the Lord—the Eternal Spirit of Truth—and in due time, here or hereafter, in His light you shall see light.

III.

Standing beneath the shadow of the Cross of our dear Master, lifted in memory again above our altar, we feel the heart of these mysteries laid bare. In the radiance of his life and death, in the glory of his revelation of God our Father, a great light breaks upon the dark problems which once loomed

so awful in man's thought of the Divine Election and of the Sacrifice of Christ. "God is not willing that any should perish but rather that all should be saved." He wills to bring all men into the redemption of Sons. He calls each of us to this salvation. Make your calling and election sure, my brother, by following the voice divine within your soul. So shall you find that you are chosen and called to be the means, through all your powers and talents, of helping your fellows into the life of true men, the life of the sons of God—thus fulfilling the good purpose of his will, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather in one all things in Christ."

You are to be brought into this state of salvation by the power over your soul of the Lord Jesus Christ. As he masters you, you will be able to master the world, the flesh and the devil. He masters you through the power of this mysterious law of sacrifice. He perfectly fulfils that law, and dies—thus making man live unto God. His own words come true—"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Does he not draw you to-day to follow Him? Follow Him in his life of self-denial for your fellows, and you will learn, in life, that which nothing apart from life can teach you—how he is "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world."

V.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

“They that murmured shall learn doctrine.”—Isa. xxix: 24.

WE have again affirmed the article of our creed which declares—“I believe in the resurrection of the body ;” and we ought to have affirmed it intelligently and sincerely. This belief, however, seems to stagger many good folk outside the orthodox churches. Few questions have been more frequently put to me, by earnest men of free thought, whom I have chanced to know, than this—How can you believe in the resurrection of the body? And truly, if the liberty which the noble Catholic Creed leaves us, under its simple statement, is to be tied up to any mere literal reading of these words, it is no wonder that our intelligence or our honesty should be faulted, when we make this solemn declaration of our belief. Such an interpretation of the creed would shut us up, apparently, to the belief that the actual body which is buried is to be raised again ; that the material organization, which resolves itself into its kindred elements, is to be put

together again and summoned from the grave, the same structure of flesh and blood that ages, perhaps, before were laid away therein.

Doubtless, there is some warrant for this strict construction of the creed, in the language of some of the more elaborate confessions of the churches ; as in the words of our Fourth Article of Religion, concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ : " Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature ; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all men at the last day." Men of the most orthodox reputation have, however, without challenge, interpreted this language under the light of the further belief that, before his ascension, the body of Jesus underwent a change, whereby it became what Paul would have called ' a spiritual body.' Without some such after-change, the resurrection of Jesus would entirely fail to type that of his followers, since his body did not pass through the stages of dissolution. Concerning the resurrection of ordinary men, our Articles are wholly silent. Even the Westminster Confession, while seeming to teach such a gross notion of the resurrection, in reality, safely qualifies its own language. " All the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities."

As might have been expected, however, the pop-

ular imagination has made out of this grandly simple affirmation of the creed, under such hints of the more elaborate confessions, a gross notion of a resurrection of the material body which is laid away in the grave. The most exact type, in art, of this popular notion is in the familiar monument in Westminster Abbey, where, graven in marble, one sees a corpse forcing open its coffin lid, and, with one leg astride of the coffin side, preparing to come forth. In my summering at quaint old East Hampton, I passed daily the peaceful graveyard where the good minister lies, at his own dying request, so buried that in the resurrection morning he may, on arising from the grave, find himself at the head of his flock, ready to lead them up into the skies. Beautiful simplicity of belief, in the days when such a thought presented comparatively little trouble to the human mind !

Need I remind you, who have, doubtless, often enough faced the problem which is involved in this old form of the historic belief, how utterly impossible such a conception is to the candid thought of our age? It is directly contrary to every analogy which nature yields. She does, indeed, know of a life out of death ; of new and higher bodies, arising out of the old decaying bodies ; of glorified forms, clothing the vital substance which passes through its transformation. But she knows no going back of life to pick up bodies that have been once dis-

carded, no creeping again within shells that have been once outgrown. She is not so poor as to be driven to such petty economies. She can afford new clothes for her children, when the old ones are worn out. She leaves the larva in the cocoon, and brings out the beautiful butterfly. She drops the seed in the ground, and raises the flower.

Such a conception of the resurrection as the traditional theology fashions, involves sheer incredibilities. Is the limping veteran of our Civil War, who left an arm in Tennessee and a leg in Georgia, and whose trunk was at last laid away in Maine, to find those lost limbs come hurtling through the air, that they may rejoin themselves to his body in the resurrection morning? What title could the ancient Egyptian establish to his body? Thousands of years ago, that body resolved its materials into their original elements and returned them to the earth and air and sea; whence they have been drawn to build up other bodies of plants and animals and men, over and over again, in the succeeding generations of life, until, by this time, one and the same elements have done duty for hundreds of different creatures. Such questions as these are on every hand, when we face the facts which are involved in this conventional notion of the resurrection. Young, in his *Night Thoughts*, gave a picture of the scene of the general resurrection which was faithful to the traditional conception, and it proves utterly prepos-

terous. Designed to awe his hearers, it provokes now a smile ; and, so far from kindling faith, it well-nigh puts faith out.

It is no wonder that such a belief furnishes a butt for irreverent wit. If this be the necessary meaning of that great article of our creed, you may well hesitate before you dare to say—"I believe in the resurrection of the body."

But what if this be only an archaic form of faith, handed down to us from the past ; the crude expression of a great mystery formed by comparatively ignorant ages ; the body of very earthly notions growing around the soul of a true belief, capable, like all bodies, of taking on nobler shapes ? At the core of this doctrine is the world-old faith in immortality ; and, swathing this innermost faith, there is the enwrapping belief that the life beyond the grave is not a purely spiritual existence, but an existence in which spirit clothes itself with some form of body. Most educated teachers thus present this belief to-day. All educated teachers have for a long time so presented this belief as to lead inevitably back to this simple conception. Their admissions and refinements have practically confessed that this was the vital principle of the belief. It can be shown that the New Testament doctrine, or teaching, is, not of a rising again of the old body, but of a rising up of man into a new body. All the moral power that came into the Western World,

when Paul preached Jesus and the Resurrection, can be shown to spring from this general statement, without pushing it out into the self-contradiction of the popular opinion. All that the human heart craves, in clinging so tenaciously to this doctrine, is found intact in the belief that we live again, not merely as disembodied, ghostly existences, but in bodies which, however refined and spiritualized, preserve the individual identity.

Is there no reality in such a conclusion? Is this doctrine another pretty bubble, blown into the air by ingenious theologians? On the contrary, if you believe at all in a life to come, you are forced to believe in a life that, in some way, builds for itself a body, however spiritualized. Nature knows no pure spirits. Life always clothes itself in some shape. True ghosts always wrap themselves up in some sort of bodies. Real spirits always materialize. The old Greek notion of shades was so powerless over men's souls because it was so unreal.

Granted a continued personal identity, reaching over into the life to come, and it follows, of necessity, that there is a certain identity of form in the body that shall be. The mystery of every man's body, even here on earth, is that, though its materials are forever changing—new matter being each day taken up into the system while old matter is every day being cast off, the whole structure thus completely renewing itself every seven years—it re-

mains recognizably the same ; not only in the salient outlines of the frame and the marked features of the face but in the subtle qualities of the voice and of the eye. I met, the other day, an old college friend whom I had scarcely seen for twenty years ; and, as we talked, the strange face lighted up with the old familiar smile, and tones of the voice came out which carried me back across a score of winters. There is a somewhat in us now which seizes these changing elements, that stream in and out of us perpetually, and stamps upon them unchanging forms ; which holds this perpetual flux of matter in one abiding mould. That mystery of form will cling to us while we exist ; and though, in one supreme crisis, the old body is thrown off, it will clothe us again in fresh matter, which must take on the same old look, in whatsoever finer form. There is no escape, it seems to me, from this conviction.

This conviction may be strengthened by our acceptance of the Scripture story of the manifestations of Jesus from the spirit world, in the old bodily form, but it is in no wise dependent on that history. It is the simple conclusion to which all Science leads us. Given a life, it must be bodied. Given a body, it must be the same body, in all that establishes the identity of the individual, whatsoever the change in its materials. Believing in im-

mortality, you must go on to affirm—"I believe in the resurrection of the body."

II.

The doctrine which more than any other has provoked indignant attacks from the critics of Christianity is the doctrine of future punishment.

Whatever the horrors of the orthodox hell, be it noted, as we turn our thoughts to the frightful vision, that it is far more a dogma of conventional religion than a doctrine of the creed; a dreadful dream of the popular imagination, rather than a deliberate, official pronouncement of the churches. The two great Catholic creeds—the Apostles' creed and the Nicene creed—affirm nothing whatever on the question of future punishment. This is a declaration that the highest orthodoxy upon this subject is—silence. There is no opinion, though backed by the most formidable array of theologians, which can claim the sanction of these august authorities in doctrine. These venerable creeds being the judges, there is no dogma of retribution which can claim to be counted among the essentials of Christianity.

Our own church, true to this wisdom of the great creeds, has not suffered herself to be drawn out from this silence, which here is so peculiarly "golden." Among all her Thirty-Nine Articles, there is not found

one which breaks in upon this impressive reticence. There is no official doctrine of hell in the English Church, nor in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States—God be praised! Other churches, like the Methodist Episcopal Church, have maintained the same silence. Even the elaborate confessions of faith which were put forth in the reformation age, wherein theologians discoursed so volubly of all things in the heavens above and the earth beneath, have comparatively little to say upon this subject. Some of them say nothing at all; and others, as even the Scotch Confession of Faith and the Heidleberg Catechism, speak only in general terms. As usual, the Westminster Confession is the one body of divinity (!) which does not hesitate to formulate in hard, rigid dogma, the opinion which has been held by the mass of men as a doctrine of Christianity. The non-elect are “fore-ordained to everlasting death.” “The end” of the judgment day is “for the manifestation of * * * his justice in the damnation of the reprobate,” who “shall be cast into eternal torments.”

But for the Evangelical Alliance, we might be able to say that the few official utterances on this painful subject have been by comparatively obscure churches, or in past centuries. Alas! that the one organization which, in Protestantism, has attempted to bring the churches together on the ground of a common Christianity, saw fit to include among its

nine Articles of Faith one which declares "the eternal punishment of the wicked." *

There can be no question whatever that a terrific dogma of future punishment has been unofficially shaped by Christendom; nor that it has been constituted the orthodox belief, in the minds of the mass of men within the churches—the belief upon which the whole superstructure of conventional theology is reared, and by which every other doctrine of that system is shaped.

There is little need for me to state this conventional dogma. It is branded in upon your hearts, in awful memories of the agonies through which we have passed, when we have faced the thought of our own future or that of those more dear to us than ourselves. Stripped of every accessory of the imagination, this belief placed before all mankind, who were not saved during their earthly life, an unending existence of conscious suffering, from which there was no possible escape in the most distant day of an inconceivable future. Even when thus reduced to its simplest terms, and when lighted up with no lurid touches of the imagination, what an awful blasphemy against God is such a belief! That for the worst possible offences such a fate

* This language might be used in an unobjectional sense, as Maurice used it; but the bitter fight made against him by the Evangelicals, for this very use of the word "eternal," shows that this was not the sense in which it was here used.

awaited one human being, would seem frightful enough. We may need to punish with swift, stern sentence, the crime of earth. There are wretches whom society cannot let live. Such monsters we kill outright. What would be thought of a civilized government which subjected even the most fiendish dynamiteur to a sentence that remanded him to the rack and thumb-screws daily, and which ordered him to be kept from dying, that this punishment might be continued through his natural term of life? But this supposed divine decree ordered, not one uttermost criminal alone, but, myriads of average human beings to such a fate. Ordinary sins entailed this doom, as well as monstrosities of crime. The taint in our blood brought down this condemnation as well as the actual offences of our own wills. Though a man had all the domestic and social virtues, yet, if he lacked an experience of saving grace, he had to face this destiny. The pretty, innocent babes in their cradles, cooing in unconscious bliss of being—on dying, dropped into this hell. The hosts of the heathen who, by the accident of their birth, never heard of the one alone secret of salvation, though walking never so carefully after the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, walked surely into this outer darkness.

Time could bring no mitigation of this doom. There was not a chance of a remission of this sentence, at some inconceivably remote period. There

was not even the hope of life's wearing out into insensibility, under this suffering, and of a lapsing, however slowly, into unconsciousness. The last benediction of death was to be denied, and the victims of the divine decrees were to live on, unconsumed in suffering, undulled in senses by all their miseries, in an agonized consciousness on which no shade of sleep should lay its merciful rest of oblivion.

To seriously believe such a dogma would be, to a sensitive soul, sheer, stark madness. What shapes of horror such a belief must take, when the imagination, dipping its brush in the pigments prepared by a guilty conscience, attempts to picture such a doom? Dante's *Inferno*, as illustrated by Dore's pencil, makes our blood curdle even now! What terrors must these graphic scenes have inspired, when they were regarded as the sketches taken by the man who had actually been in hell! What a curdling of the milk of human kindness must have taken place, under this dreadful belief, in the sweet and saintly soul of Jonathan Edwards; when, in his famous sermon, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God," he could picture God as holding the sinner, like a writhing worm, over the fires of hell! I have at home a little pamphlet, belonging to a series entitled "Books for Children," which were issued during the last decade in Dublin, by a Catholic publishing house. This particular book was written by

the Rev. J. Furniss, C.S.S.R., and was issued *permissu superiorum*. It is called the "Sight of Hell." There are thirty-seven sections in it, with such suggestive titles as: Where is hell; How far is it to hell; A bed of fire; The first dungeon of hell; A dress of fire; The third dungeon; The red-hot floor, etc. One extract will suffice to show you the realism of the descriptions. "Come into this room. You see it is very small. But see, in the midst of it there is a girl, perhaps about eighteen years old. What a terrible dress she has on—a dress of fire. On her head she wears a bonnet of fire. It is pressed down close all over her head; it burns her head; it burns her skin; it scorches the bones of the skull and makes it smoke. The red-hot, fiery heat goes into the brain and melts it. You do not, perhaps, like a headache. Think what a headache that girl must have. But see more. She is wrapped up in flames, for her frock is on fire. If she was on the earth she would be burned to a cinder in a moment. But she is in hell, where fire burns everything, but burns nothing away. There she stands burning and scorched; there she will stand forever burning and scorched! She counts with her fingers the moments as they pass away slowly, for each moment seems to her like a hundred years. As she counts the moments, she remembers that she will have to count them forever and ever. When that girl was alive she never

thought about God or her soul. She cared only for one thing, and that was dress! Instead of going to Mass on Sunday, she went about the town and the parks to show off her dress. She disobeyed her father and her mother by going to dancing-houses and all kinds of bad places, to show off her dress. And now her dress is her punishment. 'For by what things a man sinneth by the same also he is tormented.'"

On such heavenly food the shepherds of the Church of Rome in Ireland were instructed, *permissu superiorum*, to nurture their younglings.

Is it any wonder that an outraged humanity should turn, at last, upon such a dogma of the popular religion? Is it any wonder that magnetic speakers should carry their audiences with them, in their scathing exposures of the follies of such a belief, and in their passionate invectives against its atrocities? How many young men have been drawn after mere destructive unbelievers, out of sympathy with their bold attacks upon this monstrous belief of conventional Christianity!

Let me remind you, however, that outside critics of Christianity have not been alone in lifting up an indignant protest against this debasing dogma of our popular theology. In calmer moods and by wiser methods, as seeking, not to pull up the roots of a true human faith in a reality of retribution, but, to cut down the rank growth of a false belief, men

inside the churches have been making this same indignant protest. Through the whole history of the Church this protest has been, from time to time, most earnestly renewed. In our own age, this opposition has gathered such a force and volume as to have practically carried the day. Here and there a belated theologian, who has not awakened to the fact that the churches have been moving on while he was dreaming the dreams of the middle ages, rouses and puts forth a defence of the old belief; which, as one of our papers said of the recent article in *The North American Review* by a distinguished Presbyterian divine, is chiefly noticeable as a curiosity. An eminent theological professor of our own church said to me, a few years ago—"This belief has been fading out of men's minds, much as the belief in witchcraft faded out from our fathers' minds."

Young men to-day are far more likely to believe that there was nothing in this ancient belief than to suffer under its terrors. They are in danger of throwing the doctrine of future punishment away, with the conventional dogma of Christianity; of dismissing the whole idea of an awful retribution upon sin, as a superstition of the past.

Was there then no substance of truth in this ancient belief? Was this, too, only one of the ugly bubbles blown by the theologians, breaking at the touch of hard fact? If so, then it is a singular

fact that men of so many different races and creeds and ages have shared this belief in common. You can trace it as far back as there is any light upon the pages of history. Nor were they ignorant and semi-savage peoples, alone, who were profoundly impressed by this thought. The most cultivated races, in the culmination of their civilization, in the persons of their greatest men, were awed before this great mystery. Go back to the immortal tragedies of classic Greece, and you will find that the problem which lay at the heart of the noblest of those studies of destiny was the certainty and awfulness of the retribution which followed wrong. The plot of human tragedy, so saw the great souls of Greece, turned upon the issue of some sin ; its shifting scenes were worked by the unseen hand of Nemesis. Go back of Greece to Egypt, and you will find, in the palmy days of that land, a religion which based its beautiful culture of character upon a doctrine of future punishment. Its funeral services were mimic representations of the stern and solemn trial of the departed, in the awful Court of Truth. Among both of those ancient peoples, this belief was no mere superstition, but an intelligent, nobly ethical conviction.

What, then, was the core of this problem of retribution, which thus awed the best of the ancients? Law ruled over earth. That law ordained righteousness. It bound up a penalty with every viola-

tion. Man could never escape the forth-reaching hand of outraged law, let him flee where he would. Sooner or later, his sin was sure to overtake him, with scourges in its hand. If he out-distanced the avenger in this world, there was time in the next for it to creep up upon him. The wrong-doer, with every wrong, wove around him a web in which, were he never so cunning and never so strong, he was at the last meshed. If wrongs should not be thus surely punished, there could be no real law throned above creation.

This is, in brief, the substance of the ancient belief in retribution, which reappeared in strengthened force in Christianity, under its fresh, ethical impulse, and which, out of the fancies of superstitious ages, wove around itself such a dark body.

Has this become an obsolete belief? On the contrary, all the ancient facts confront us still. The same mysterious problem of guilt shadows, more or less heavily, every human lot. Nemesis still spins the web which meshes the wrong-doer—the web which is so fine that no eye sees it in its weaving, so strong that no hand can break through it when it is woven. The same imperious instinct rises up within the soul of man, affirming that, if there be a Just Power ruling over creation, every wrong must be redressed, sooner or later—if not here, then in the hereafter.

These ancient perceptions and beliefs are even

strengthened by the wider knowledge of our age. If there is one truth which has been made indisputable by physical science, it is that there is a reign of law throughout creation. If there is one truth which has been made indisputable by social science, it is that there is a reign of law throughout society. Social science makes it equally plain that the law which rules in human society finds its highest expression in the moral law. The various forms of law which combine in moulding civilization prove a hierarchy of powers, at the head of which stands the moral law, ranking every other force. The problems of the statesman and of the political economist disclose, at their core, a moral principle. Some duty has been left undone, some wrong has been done wherever a sore festers in the body politic, wherever an issue runs in blood. The most impossible belief for us to-day is the belief that any law can be violated with impunity. The most absolutely certain of all convictions in us is that, by as much as it is the crowning law of life, the moral law will vindicate itself ; ensuring the welfare of him who obeys it, and the woe of him who disobeys. The cutest Yankee is not smart enough to come out ahead of Nature. No most ingenious system of moral financiering can throw Nature's accountants off the track of covered wrong, or permanently bolster up the credit of the moral bankrupt. The man who sins, suffers. He suffers in proportion to his

sins. He may not suffer consciously. He may be happy in his successful wrong, while others admire his luck. Then he suffers unconsciously ; receiving the worst and most fatal of injuries which sin can inflict—loss of sensibility. The measure and range of sensitiveness is the measure and range of life. To lose the sense of sin in successful wrong, is to lose one's highest, noblest life. " And what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own life ? "

True, there are plenty of apparent exceptions to this law. But what law is without exceptions, in this imperfect state of existence ? It is always difficult to recognize the action of a great law in isolated cases. We need to bring together many individual facts, in order to understand a law. Thus, it is easier to perceive the inviolability of the moral law in the large field of history than in the little corner which any one individual fills. When have nations trifled, with impunity, with the moral law ? Earth is the cemetery of Empires and Kingdoms, wherein, as we read the inscriptions on the tombstones, we repeat a monotonous story. One disease carried them all off, though involved in many widely different complications. The decline and fall of each dates from the period when the moral law, in which lies society's health, was habitually violated. Decay of every power of the State set in, after moral corruption had been developed. History is one long

sermon upon the certainty of retribution on national sin.

Even in the careers of individuals, when we follow the sweep of law patiently enough, we generally see retribution overtaking the wrong-doer. And our furthest vision, within the horizon of earth, is not sufficient to bring out into the light more than a little segment of the orbit of the moral law. Project the lines of its action on into a future life, and you can see far enough to perceive that its pathway must lead the unfortunate wrong-doer into some outer darkness. If not here, then hereafter, the obdurate offender must experience the penalty of the law which he has violated. We need call in the aid of none of the fiends whom Dante saw, busied in punishing sinners. Leave man in the hands of that retribution which rules in ethics as in physics, in the soul as in the body, and you may be absolutely sure that, if he escapes the suffering ordained upon sin here, he will experience it hereafter. Suffering follows sin, as effect follows cause. Put your hand in the fire and it will burn. Let your soul drop into sin and it will burn too—in its own way.

Even that most awful feature of the old belief—the fatality of sin—is not without a certain substance of truth in it, which haunts us still with a mysterious shadow, under which we may well walk in fear and trembling, amid the sins which tempt us at every step. Biology reveals, in all forms of life, the action

of a tendency towards retrogression, as well as the action of a tendency towards a progressive development of the organism unto its norm. There is a law of death as well as a law of life in our members. These two tendencies are found in the sphere of ethics as in the sphere of physics. Character tends constantly to deliquesce, unless serious efforts are made by conscience. Decay may set in within the soul. Nature, indeed, endows most forms of life with wonderful recuperative powers. While no violation of the laws of health leaves your body unharmed, it can stand many violations without fatal injury—else how should any of us live at all? But, if the offences be too often repeated, if they be carried into a habit, disease of some sort sets in and death follows. There is a limit to the recuperative powers in our physical nature. The analogy seems to hold good in the sphere of character. Decay, setting in within the soul, may be carried too far, and prove irremediable. There would seem to be such a limit to the recuperative action of moral energy. A man's power of recovering character may be lost. The will breaks down. The moral nature becomes fatally diseased. We give him up for this life. This awful shadow projects itself out into the life to come. We do not see how some natures can ever recover. Our only hope lies in the Infinite Power and Love of God.

Close your Bibles, my young friends, if you will ;

turn away from the churches, which have so frightfully caricatured this belief in future punishment, but do not dream of escaping the reality of retribution. You can only escape a belief in retribution by closing your eyes to facts. Science will teach it to you in new and even more awful terms, if you will listen to her voice. You may smile at the conventional hell, as a superstition; but you must be light-hearted, indeed, if you do not stand in awe before the unforgivingness which science preaches as her gospel of law. Nature is no fond mother, who spoils her child by over-tenderness. She never spares the rod. Nature is no quack, pretending to cure cancers with rosewater. Her treatment is heroic, her measures are drastic.

Look around you, and observe the wrecks of once promising careers that have been caused through drink. See the homes which have been broken up, by the lawless passions of husband and wife. Note the places that are vacant in society, through the temptations of speculation! It is not great crimes alone which ruin men and women. Men go to pieces like our ships, eaten out by vermicular vices. Selfishness or weakness, alone, will rot away a character. Every circle can show its Tito Melema or its George Osborne.

Whenever society suffers a fatty degeneration of the heart, and pity disintegrates into sentimentality, some atrocious wickedness shocks us out of our

mawkish dreams, and opens our eyes to the necessity for a stern avenging law, if society is to hold together. What will the pretty platitudes of moral suasion do with the dynamiteur? Science has brought to light a force which can level, in an instant, the mightiest structures, which can be prepared by any man, and which can be handled by any woman. And civilization brings to light wretches—human fiends—who can use this force to blow up the most venerable monuments of history, and to hurl into death hosts of human beings, against whom they have no possible grudge. Shall society prate now about the abolition of capital punishment, build comfortable reformatories for these monsters, and set soft women, who find their sphere in carrying flowers to a brutal murderer in Long Island City jail, on duty in them? Or, shall it strike such devils down in a righteous wrath, as unfit to live upon our earth? And then shall these monsters walk straight into Paradise? Will they not need to go to their ‘own place’ in the world to come; to find a very real hell in the next life, if only to save them for a future heaven?

We are all stirred now by this monstrous wickedness. But no less abominable deviltries are daily being done around us in this great city. Not long ago a young lady of refinement and education, who was trying to win an honest livelihood in this great Babel, on a salary of six dollars a week, had an

offer of a somewhat better position. She took it, grateful for the slight easing of the burden of life. She found out, by degrees, that the gentleman who had proffered it to her, apparently out of pity, had simply meant to make her dependent upon him, in order to tempt her into sin. The other day, I learned that some of the elder girls in our schools had been attracted to a certain office in this city, under the hopes which were held out of good positions, only to find that this office was a trap for their bodies and their souls. Such things are going on all about us. Plainly creation cannot yet get along without some sort of a hell.

It is indeed high time to cast away the monstrous notion of hell which the popular imagination has fashioned round the simply solemn words of Scripture, concerning the retribution that waits on sin; but do not cast rashly away, my young friends, the inner substance of that belief, for it is most real and true. Do not play with sin. There is dynamite in a wrong deed. There is poison in a wrong thought. The sins which look so pleasant now that you want to go with them, will take on other faces when you try to escape from them, only to find them haunting you with their shaming memories. Thus runs an ancient Persian parable: "In a region of bleak cold wandered a soul which had departed from the earth; and there stood before him a hideous woman, profligate and deformed. 'Who art thou?'

he cried. 'Who art thou, than whom no demon could be more foul and horrible?' To him she answered, 'I am thine own actions!'"

It is a number of years since I last saw, in the Louvre, the wonderful picture of Prudhon, which many of you will recall; but I seem still to see, in all its ghostly terror, that vision of Cain fleeing from his dead brother, pursued by the Furies. May we never learn the reality which that picture parables!

NOTE.—The following remarks were read at the close of this sermon, when preached.

I close with this discourse the first part of the present course of sermons. Next week I propose leading you into a consideration of some hints which point to the invulnerability of the fundamental faiths of religion under the attacks of modern Philistinism. In the sermons already given I have been so needlessly misunderstood that I beg you to bear with me a moment longer, while I sum up, in a few words, the positions taken in these discourses.

I have attacked no single article of our creed, neither in the letter nor in the spirit of my words. I have attacked no one of our Thirty-nine Articles. I have not attacked any doctrine put forth by our church in any of her formularies. I have spoken in strong words of several of the doctrines of Christianity, as they appear in the popular theology, and in some of the confessions of faith of other churches; but I never knew that these forms were binding upon us in this church. Even such denunciation has not formed the staple of my sermons. My aim has not been to prove them wrong, but simply to show that, as thus shaped by the Calvinistic confessions and by the popular theology, they give too much occasion for the irreverent wit of scoffers and the audacious onslaughts of men who have thrown

off all faith. In each sermon, I have passed quickly through the husks of popular dogmas, to find and bring out to you somewhat of that which I understand to be the inner substance of these doctrines ; seeking to show you that, so far from representing exploded superstitions, these doctrines stand for most real problems ; problems which are still before us as they were before our fathers ; problems which we must state, as best we can, in the thought and language of our day, as our fathers stated them in the thought and language of their day ; or that, failing in any satisfactory statement, we must rest content in the old formulas, until the Divine Spirit causes "the doctrine of knowledge to appear as the light." I have thus sought to indicate to you that the old beliefs, when stripped of the glosses of the popular imagination, read far more nobly than most men dream ; and that we can see that they are capable of taking on still higher forms ; of which dim shadows fall athwart our path to-day, assuring us that there will be a theology of the future, in which the old doctrines shall quicken into beliefs full of power over life. Our wisdom, therefore, as I have taught, in this trying age, when change follows change in our mental outlook, is to bide patiently under the old forms, even when not satisfactory ; rejecting the follies and wrongs of the popular theology but holding by the doctrines of which they are distorted images. For any unguarded words which may have given offence to any devout souls, may God forgive me ; and for the unjust reproaches of my brethren upon one who, however faultily, was trying to help his fellows into a living faith—may God forgive them !

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VI.

THE MYSTERY OF MATTER.

“Without God in the world.”—Ephe. ii : 12.

HARD times drive men to severe economies, and they learn that they can do without many things which they once counted as necessities. Sooner or later, however, in the process of retrenchment, they reach the things which they find that they can do without, only by doing without life. You may wear somewhat shabby clothes, but clothes of some sort you must wear. You can dispense with the luxuries of the table, but you must have bread.

Hard times come to the Church as well as to the world ; times when an excessive expansion of belief has to undergo a proportionate contraction ; when watered creeds have to shrink ; when Christianity has to pass through a reaction from an over-production of doctrine. The issue of such times ought to be, not bankruptcy but spiritual soundness ; confessions of faith representing no inflation of the imagination but a solid substance of reason ; a coinage of creeds having a gold basis. We are fast learning how much, which our fathers counted es-

sential, we can do without. We are learning, so as by fire, that there are some faiths which we cannot do without. There are absolute necessities of the soul—of society. Such absolute necessities of our religion are the faith in God, the faith in the life to come, and the faith in Jesus Christ, as the one in whom we receive the full revelation of God and Immortality. Having considered some of the beliefs of Christianity which, in their undue development, have led to a temporary loss of our creeds' credit—a loss that will naturally repair itself by the process of theological readjustment—I pass on now to speak of the fundamental faiths, whose integrity cannot be assailed, or even questioned, without imperilling the very bases of society.

However shocked we may be with the manner of those who expose, coarsely and irreverently, the unsoundness of the developments which certain beliefs of Christianity have undergone, in the popular mind and in the Calvinistic confessions, we may yet feel that, in this task, they may have a real service to perform to the future of religion. But when they proceed to undermine the foundation faiths of religion ; the faiths which most men who try to do without find, sooner or later, to be absolute necessities to noble living ; the faiths which society finds that it can do without only by doing without life itself ; the faiths whose loss would be, with us as with the peoples of the past, the darkness of utter unbelief,

despair, anarchy, death—then it is precisely those whose eyes are open to the needful contraction of secondary beliefs, who may lift the most indignant protests against this blasphemy of Atheism and Infidelity.

To follow the most noted of our living assailants of religion through his illogical reasonings and his shallow notions, his almost childish assumptions and his questionings which so well illustrate the old proverb about the fool and the sage—this would be an endless and a thankless task. He is, in this work, simply the blatant mouth-piece of the crude thought of our day. Such scepticism is largely the gas which rises from mental dyspepsia—the failure of the intellect to digest the masses of knowledge which it has swallowed raw. The correction of such a disease, which, unlike other forms of dyspepsia, is contagious, lies in inducing young men to chew the cud of thought a little more carefully.

One hears to-day, from men who are supposed to be educated, talk that is thoroughly crass, and which simply displays the ignorance existing as to the real foundations of religion. Men who ought to know better speak as though Science holds the fuse to a charge of powder which may any day blow up the whole structure of religion. To hearken to them, we should fancy the savant as an arch-engineer, sitting in a sort of Hell-gate centre of operations; around him banked, high and dry, the disembowelled

superstitions of earth ; beneath him the deep, dark shaft, radiating out its fan-like galleries, whose thin surface, propped up by provisional scaffolding, sustains the ancient river-bed over which our busy life plies to and fro, unconscious that at any moment the holder of the great secret may give the order for the explosion which shall change forever the old order and shall make all things new. We are expected to sit in our temples as though dimly hearing, below us, the stealthy tread of the sappers and miners ; faintly catching the muffled sound of pick and hammer ; seeing every now and then some ancient bit of belief disappear, some new cavity yawn darkly beneath us ; waiting in vague dread the coming of a day when the venerable structure of our faith shall topple in above us, and our religion either disappear from earth, buried beneath the noble pile which it had reared, or wander forth homeless upon the reconstructed earth, a relic of the past civilization—still, perhaps, in ghostly silence, to visit men in the dreamy light of night, but to appear no more among the realities of the light of day.

Truly, my friends, no worship can be hearty that is accompanied with the rumblings of such subterranean orchestration. Every other danger would be as nothing to this. We can pull down and rebuild our temple where it is proven defective ; we can rejuvenate its interior ; we can change and mod-

ify it to any extent that is needful, while the foundations are undisturbed, and the new faith takes thus the old and hallowed form. But, if we are to be insecure in the foundation faiths, if our basic beliefs are to be honey-combed with doubt, religion cannot renew her lease of authority over men. We might as well close our temple, declare the *deccheance* of religion, and anticipate the revolution.

All such talk seems to me utter folly—displaying unpardonable ignorance of the ground on which religion rests. Since it is heard around us, however, we may need now and then to investigate our foundations, to sink our own counter-shafts, and find out whether the approaches of inquiry have really endangered our position.

Our creed begins, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.” This is the root faith—the foundation belief. It is the affirmation of Mind in nature; of Will putting itself forth in force, of Intelligence thinking out design in material organizations, of Character ordering law.

The faith in God has never been a demonstration of pure mathematics. It has always been possible to doubt it or even to deny it. It has never been intelligently held without a perception of the difficulties that are involved in it. It has been held in spite of these difficulties, however, by the deepest minds of the noblest races in the greatest ages, as the alone solution of the problem of life. The difficul-

ties which rise up against this faith to-day are largely old difficulties in new forms. They are objections which have been faced and mastered by the thought of men who have moved abreast of all discoveries, carrying their faith with them and landing on every new ground that has been opened by Science, to plant there the flag of a reasonable and reverent religion.

No close and severe reasoning, such as the subject demands for adequate treatment, is within the conditions of pulpit discourse. All that I shall try to do is to suggest hints of the reasons for reassuring yourselves, my young friends, that you are still on solid ground when you affirm this sublime faith of your Creed.

The hardest argument to face is—a sneer! And the young man who really seems to believe in God to-day is very apt to encounter a sneer. It is met in the condescension with which religion is treated by many students of physical science; in the sense of superiority evidently felt by “practical men” to the illusions of the women and children who continue to believe in the Heavenly Father; in the quiet assumption that modern knowledge has somehow outgrown the idea of God, and labelled it, in the museum of intellectual curiosities, as “an ancient superstition.”

Let me, then, ask you one question to-day. Has

our most modern knowledge exhausted the infinite mystery of life, before which our fathers bowed saying—God?

The Philistinism of our age fancies that it has exhausted the mystery of life, that it has accounted for everything at which earlier ages used to marvel, and that it has left nothing upon the earth before which a man has need to take his shoes from off his feet and bow his head in awe and worship. Boundless conceit has inflated the mind of man. When I was a boy, I was taught, as I looked out from my bed-room window at the stars shining bright in the silent skies of night, to fold my child-hands and reverently say :

“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.”

The coming boy, who has been duly instructed in the ‘isms’ and ‘ologies,’ will look out of his window and, with his cap cocked jauntily upon his head, will thus soliloquize :

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
I don't wonder what you are.
You're the cooling down of gases
Hardened into solid masses.

Of course a true science is no irreverent charlatan. It is profoundly humble, and wonders with a new and deeper awe, whose only worship is—silence.

But the superficial science, which most makes itself heard, shows too much of this air of omniscience.

Nor should it surprise us that it is so. With the first flush of enthusiasm, the disciples of the new teacher have fondly expected that, at last, the old Sphynx was to be forced to tell her long-kept secret. Men have thought that they held in their hands the key to nature's hieroglyphs. Geology should tell how the earth came into beginning; astronomy should reveal the origins of the infinitude around; chemistry should resolve man's nature; physiology should give us the true psychology, and we should know ourselves and know all nature. It is easy to pardon the enthusiasm which saw, omened in the dawning splendor of science, a meridian of knowledge in which every hidden thing should be made manifest. So overpowering has been the rapid succession of discoveries by which, out of the obscurity of space, we have wrested the secrets of the stellar elements, and out of the entombments of the past have revived prehistoric ages; so resistlessly does the summons of science force every most silent fact of nature into the witness-box, and draw forth its reluctant confessions, for the lack of which judgment has seemed hitherto to drag its slow length along interminably—that this intoxicating hope has been quite natural. Science is far enough on now in her handling of the case to satisfy us as to the limits of truth which she is likely to reach.

Is, then, the ancient mystery evaporating from the earth? Has science disenchanted the world of the marvellous, or convicted the imagination of hallucination, in peopling the earth with the shadows of an Infinite Presence and Power?

Now that we have the history of the globe, and can give geology's account of its formation and of its peopling with life, is its story all intelligible? What are these earths and minerals and gases about whose actions and re-actions we have discovered so much? Are they themselves any more intelligible, now that we can tell, with such precision, their history, their qualities and the sequences of their inter-action? Now that we have astronomy's story of the heavens, has the old mystery disappeared from the skies? We have corrected the Ptolemaic chart, "with cycle and epicycle scribbled o'er;" we have learned to draw the pathway of the stars, and to identify the power which holds worlds in their orbits with the power which pulls the apple from the tree; we have found out the nature of the general process through which these mighty worlds have come into being, and can write a history of the evolution of a sun; we have turned gigantic telescopes upon the planets, and have made maps of Mars and Venus; we have tested the constituents of the stars by our spectroscopes, and can speak authoritatively concerning the existence in them of the elements which we have on our earth: but

when we have learned this much, with all else that we have added to our knowledge, have we exhausted the heavens of mystery? Have we not, on the contrary, opened up further and deeper mysteries—mysteries which intensify the awe with which the ancients bowed beneath the wonders of the starry skies? Does not every step in the story of the earth, or of the heavens, raise questions which completely baffle us? Is there a single theory which we accept, as a so-called interpretation of any factor in the development of our world or of the worlds around us, which is not itself a greater mystery than the facts which it seems to explain?

Turn where we will, in the commonest phenomena that confront us in our daily life amid nature, we face mysteries which baffle all our questionings and mock our conceit of knowledge. Read the latter portion of Job carefully, and you will perceive that the unknown ancient who wrote this sublime poem could put questions which the man who boasts, as a noted German once boasted, of being “armed with all the culture of the age,” cannot answer. The author of Job had watched the clouds floating in the summer sky, forming as out of nothing, breaking again into nothingness, wreathing themselves in curious convolutions, poising in stationariness in mid-air, as though upheld by some invisible hand, clinging round some wooded hill-side like a gauzy drapery, circling the bare mountain crest like

a spirit crown—and he had asked himself in vain the secret of their motion and of their rest. So he represents Jehovah as rebuking the folly of human conceit by putting to Job the question—"Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?" We know, doubtless, a vast deal about the clouds which this ancient student of nature did not know; we are learning the secrets of their motion, and we have plausible explanations offered of the secret of their strange rest in the air; but I believe that not even the learned physicist who discourses so eloquently of the Forms of Water, can answer, without hesitancy, that simple question concerning this most ordinary phenomenon of nature.

So you can stop at every step in a summer's walk, and, in every most common object beneath, around, above, you may see that which will leave you standing silent, awed, if awe there be in you, before a mystery which no questioning can probe. Nor is this ignorance your own lack of learning, merely. Go home from such a walk and turn the pages of the latest books, and you will find in them the same ignorance. Take the ablest scientists out with you, over the ground which has started up such eluding questions, and see how many of these questions they can bring down. They will give you abundance of the most interesting and valuable knowledge—knowledge which is absolutely new to our century,—but each will soon find the limit of

his range, and leave the highest-soaring queries free in the air. If you are anything of a questioner you can raise interrogations at which the wisest of them will not even aim.

Are you not, yourself, a walking wonder, which ought to give you pause in any rash conceit of knowledge? Three times a day you take food, and not once a year, probably, do you stop and think, at the close of a meal, of the marvel by which wheat and corn and bird and fish and water turn within you into bone and flesh and blood, into flowing hair and glistening teeth, into eyes sweeping the depth of space, and into ears receiving accurately the bewildering harmonies of a Wagner. How do I thus lift my arm, my all-knowing friend? I don't know, you don't know, nobody knows. We can all repeat the received formula—The mind issues its mandate, the energy of the will charges the nerves with force, the force pulls the muscle cords, and the arm is raised. But pause a moment, in this easy description, and scratch the surface of these familiar words. What is mind? What is will? What is energy? What is force? How does a mental volition transfer itself into a physical action? What is the bridge over which the will passes out of mind into matter? In the words of the children's old saying, more true than grammatical, "You nor I nor nobody knows."

I often imagine Socrates back among us, with his

air of utter simplicity and child-like ignorance, amid the learned and glib-tongued sophists of our day, who are dead sure of knowing everything, and are ready to explain every difficulty with an air which seems to say, "See how wise I am"! And then, I fancy the quiet, searching, innocent-looking questions which he would raise; driving the quackery of omniscience back from point to point, until it stood humbled before the mysteries which shamed it into silence. He would not need to go far in such a chain of questions. He would turn up our surface knowledge anywhere, and discover profundities of ignorance.

We are in constant danger of fooling ourselves into an acceptance of science's notes for gold; of mistaking a label for an explanation. We forget that when we have learned the existence of a law or of a force, and have ascertained much about the method of its action, we have learned perhaps nothing about the nature of the law or of the force.

What is more common in popular speech, and even in that which passes for scientific writing, than this mistaking of a label for an explanation? We fancy that we have explained the mystery of the apple falling from the tree, or the greater mystery of the revolution of the stars in their orbits, when we say that the apple falls to the earth and that the stars sweep through their orbits under the law of gravitation. What is the law of gravitation, but a

label for a fact of which we know, in reality, nothing, that will pass as an explanation of it. Matter attracts matter. One object attracts another. That is the fact about which we have found out many curious and interesting particulars, and which we have applied in most valuable ways, in diverse spheres, as in astronomy and in gunnery. But what is the nature of this attraction, or drawing? What is it in matter that draws, and how does it draw? How does this drawing make itself felt through space, across distances which stagger the imagination? What is this subtle omnipotence which thus reaches out a leash so fine that no power of man can detect the threads; which throws it over worlds separated by myriad millions of miles, and then holds them in a clasp which not even their stupendous weight can break; binding the universe into a rhythmic movement, whose harmony no sun-storms can disturb, no lapse of time can turn to discord.

We can make a fetich of an idea, as well as of a fact, of a word as well as of a stone. We say that all things are developed and ordered by law, and that there is a reign of law; and we think that thus we have accounted for the old puzzle. But what is law? Whence did it come? How did it get itself stamped upon nature? What mind devised it? What power enforces it? When we have found out a law, we have simply found out the mode of action of a force of which we may know nothing whatever,

as to its nature and origin. It is very important to find out these laws of nature, as thus we learn how to utilize the forces which are acting round about us, and how to regulate our affairs. Such a knowledge is fascinating in its interest, and full of a noble beauty. But, pray, do not fool yourself with thinking that you have offered me an explanation of nature's wonders, when you tell me the laws by which those wonders act. You have done nothing of the kind. You have simply taken a descriptive label for an explanation. The "universe," says Dr. Carpenter, "is not governed *by* law, but *according to* law."

We speak glibly of the mighty forces of nature, by which she accomplishes these wonders. Our fathers knew little about them, while we are daily learning more concerning them. We feel quite at home in the workshops of these stupendous magicians. We have lost our awe before the genii of earth and air, whom we have grown used to see harnessed to our engines and running our errands. We feel as though we knew all about them, and had been taken into the secrets of these silent miracle workers. Suppose, then, you ask yourself, my young friend, what is electricity? It leaps in forked tongue from the warring storm clouds, and changes a sultry atmosphere into an air charged with tonic influences. It flashes from New York across a continent, following the track of the wires

hung in air ; and then, as quickly, tracks its way back from San Francisco, along the earth, through mountains and over rivers, with unerring instinct ; and in a trice puts a girdle round a continent. It is so docile that a child can command it, and send it hither and thither with our messages ; and it is, withal, so terrible that life withers at its breath, and the mightiest structures totter at its touch. Do you really fancy that you know what electricity is ? Can you write its chemical formula, or can you put its essence into any snug little vial of a theory and say—Here it is ?

What is force ? When you have given the various forms of force names and have learned to know the methods of their action, you are very apt to think that you have come to understand them. Have you ? Is creation explained when you speak of it as the result of the forces of nature ? What are these forces ? How do they slip one into another, like a very Proteus ? Whence came they ? Who charged nature with the potencies which turn into such awful powers ?

We speak of these wonders all around us as the work of Nature, and think that we have thus accounted for them. A certain orator declared, the other Sunday evening, that the one thing which was sure to stand was nature. What, then, is nature ? A term for the aggregate of forces and laws which are working in the order of creation ; a

generalization which gives these forces and laws a unity, and enables us to make a convenient personification. What, in reality, is nature? Whence is it? How does it have its powers and laws? The savant cannot tell you. He does not know. No one knows. Butler, in his famous "Analogy," long since said that "the only distinct meaning of the word 'natural' is stated, fixed, settled;" and that "it as much requires an intelligent agent to effect anything statedly, fixedly, regularly, that is, naturally, as to effect it for once only, or supernaturally."

We say that our world, as it is to-day, and all other worlds, as they are now, are the product of Evolution. Granted. But what is evolution? An unfolding. An unfolding of what? An unfolding out of what? We do not know; nobody knows. We have to postulate a mystery, as the seed or egg out of which creation develops. That is as unknown now as it was in the far back ages wherein Hindoo sages fashioned this same high thought of evolution.

Law, force, nature, evolution—these are the names for unknown mysteries. The inexplicable remains, after all that we have explained—profound, exhaustless. All roads lead out into mystery. In every most ordinary bit of nature there is a segment of the infinite mystery. So far from exhausting this mystery, science has only deepened,

broadened, heightened it. It is not now the unusual that astonishes us—the common-place fills us with awe. Men used to think that they saw clearly all but the miraculous. We know now that we see thoroughly—nothing. We know only phenomena, appearances. The inner substance within these phenomena, the reality standing under these appearances, we do not know one whit. The veil now spans the horizon. The clouds hang low above our heads.

I do not mean, of course, to deny that we have a vast, a wonderful, a benign light shed upon the problems of earth. I simply mean to remind you that, when we have all the light which can possibly radiate from our latest sciences, this light does but disclose a larger and denser circumference of darkness around our ever-widening knowledge.

A little boy wakens in a strange room at night, and feels the affrighting darkness all around him. He can see nothing at all in the room. He strikes a match and lights the candle by his bedside, and, as it burns, he is comforted. He has light now on the darkness; he will be able to see what is in the room. He does see what is immediately around him, and the forms of tables and chairs stand out visibly in the gloom. But he cannot see all that is in the room. His candle only lights a narrow circle of space. All around this illumined centre, there broods a darkness which shades off into utter

impenetrability. He strains his eyes to make out what is in that outer darkness, but he strains in vain. His light has disclosed a larger and deeper darkness. Another candle is lighted, and a wider circle comes out of obscurity, leaving a proportionately wider circumference of darkness. He may thus light one candle after another, until the limits of the largest room are reached, and the whole arca is rayed through with light. Then he knows all the things that are in the room. But what if the walls of the room expand as fast as the increasing power of his candles? What if there be no walls at all; no walled-off room, limited, measurable, finite? What if he lies awake in infinite space? How many candles will he need to illumine it? Is he ever likely to bring its contents out of darkness into light?

That is our position. Man wakens in a strange world. All is dark around him. Science lights a candle and brings out somewhat of the darkness into light, but leaves a rim of darkness still around the light. Successive candles illumine more and more of the darkness, but draw an ever enlarging circumference of blackness round the area of our knowledge. We know vastly more than our fathers knew, and that suffices to show us a vaster realm than they imagined, lying beyond the furthest ken of man. Is there candle power enough in science

to illumine the universe? Will the finite mind ever comprehend the infinite mystery?

Little men of science may brag and take on airs of omniscience. The great men of science are modest and humble, and confess that our latest knowledge leaves us still before an infinite mystery, which all our light but suffices to discover; an all-encompassing darkness which we are powerless to illumine. One of the foremost scientists in our own country lately wrote me—"I have always carried with me a deep and solemn sense of the great and all-absorbing mystery which encloses us."

Mr. Tyndall says, in one place: "If you ask me whether science has solved, or is likely in our day to solve, the problem of this universe, I must shake my head in doubt." *

A higher authority in science than Mr. Tyndall, no less a master than the philosopher who moulds the thinking of the scientific school—Mr. Herbert Spencer—repeats, in stronger language, the confession of the invincible resistance which the mystery of nature offers to the researches of science. "Probably not a few will conclude that here is an attempted solution of the great questions with which philosophy in all ages has perplexed itself. Let none thus deceive themselves. Only such as know not the scope and limits of science can fall into so grave an error. The foregoing generalizations ap-

* "Fragments of Science"; p. 92.

ply not to the genesis of things in themselves, but to their genesis as manifested to the human consciousness. After all that has been said, the ultimate mystery remains just as it was. The explanation of that which is explicable does but bring out into greater clearness the inexplicableness of that which remains behind. As fast as science transfers more and more things from the category of irregularities to the category of regularities, the mystery which once attached to the superstitious explanations of them becomes a mystery that attaches to the scientific explanations of them; there is a merging of many special mysteries in one general mystery. The progress is toward an ultimate recognition of a mystery behind every act and appearance, and a transfer of the awe from something special and occasional to something universal and unceasing. No one need expect, then, that the religious consciousness will die away or will change its lines of evolution. The child, by wrapping its head in the bed-clothes, may for a moment get rid of the distinct consciousness of surrounding darkness, but the consciousness, though rendered less vivid, survives, and imagination persists in occupying itself with that which lies beyond perception. No such thing as a 'religion of humanity' can ever do more than temporarily shut out the thought of a power of which humanity is but a small and fugitive product, which was, in course of ever-changing mani-

festation, before humanity was, and will continue, through other manifestations, when humanity has ceased to be." *

Contrast this spirit, my young friends, with the blatant conceit of omniscience which, amid the holy temple of nature, where the choirs of life forever lift the anthem—"The whole earth is full of thy glory," walks pert and brassy; noisily irreverent, like a cockney in one of the old cathedrals of the Continent; seeing nothing to lead to the bowing of the head in awe; cracking jokes upon the sacred building where mankind has worshipped, as feeling the presence-place of the living God.

This, then, is the conclusion to which every investigation leads us; the conclusion in which the greatest authorities confirm the common sense of mankind. We are still in the presence of an awful mystery, infinite, eternal, sphering all knowledge in ignorance, rimming all light with darkness; a mystery before which the mind and heart of man must, of necessity, continue ever to yield the worship of awe; hearing, wherever it may find itself upon the earth, the voice of old—"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." "Who can by searching find out God?" "Clouds and darkness are round about him." Our wisdom, as our duty, is, therefore, "to walk humbly with our God."

* *Con. Review*, vol. xxxii: p. 15.

That which the common sense of mankind perceives, which the authority of the leaders of science confirms, the royal words of the great poets seal with certainty. One and all, these seers of humanity bow in unutterable awe before the impenetrable mysteries of nature, as before the clouds which veil the presence of an Infinite Power, to be named still, as of old—God. One and all repeat to us, in varying language, the words of Tennyson:

“Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies :—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.”

VII.

MIND IN NATURE.

“There is a spirit in man.”—Job, xxxii : 8.

“God is Spirit.”—John, iv : 24.

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth,

And the heavens are the work of thy hand :

They shall perish ; but thou continuest :

And they shall wax old as doth a garment ;

And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up,

As a garment and they shall be changed :

But thou art the same,

And thy years shall not fail.”

Ps. cii : 25, 26 ; quoted in Heb. i : 11, 12.

AS profound as ancient, as noble as beautiful is the thought which found expression in these words. Matter is not the all of man. There is a spirit in him. This spirit in man images the Spirit in nature, whose form presses through the forms of matter which it draws around itself, and with which it clothes itself as a living garment.

Fresh with each new born child comes this thought into life again ; natural and necessary to us moderns, as to the ancients. I can still recall the impression made upon my child-mind by the

title of a little book which I read in years long gone by—"The House I live In." My philosophy of being dates from the questions which that title wakened in me, and from the answers which came to those questions of a child-wonder. That which the boy divined, in the mystery of a spirit in man which inhabits a fleshly house, so fearfully and wonderfully made, the greatest philosophers of our day have recognized as the secret of the problem of man, and the secret of the problem of nature. They say, with Sir William Hamilton, "Man is not an organism; he is an intelligence served by organs. For in man there are tendencies—there is a law—which continually urge him to prove that he is more powerful than the nature by which he is surrounded and penetrated. He is conscious to himself of faculties not comprised in the chain of physical necessity; his intelligence reveals prescriptive principles of action, absolute and universal, in the law of duty, and a liberty capable of carrying that law into effect in opposition to the solicitations, the impulses, of his material nature. * * * If, then, the original independence of intelligence on matter in the human constitution—in other words, if the spirituality of the mind in man—be supposed a datum of observation, in this datum also is given both the condition and the proof of a God." *

* HAMILTON'S "Metaphysics": Bowen: pp. 16 and 18.

This same profound truth the greatest seers of our age perceive, in awe, with that typical modern—Goethe ; who makes the earth-spirit sing :

“’Tis thus the roaring loom of time I ply,
And weave for God the vesture thou seest him by.”

Religion is the worship which spirit pays to Spirit. Faith is the trust of the finite spirit in the Infinite Spirit.

We have seen that our modern knowledge does not exhaust nature of mystery ; that it leaves still, as of old, on every hand, the presence of an Infinite Power which we can never hope to comprehend—the Power which we rightly worship as “God.”

Is there left no “I myself” within this house of clay, facing “The Self,” as the Hindoo phrases it, within the organization of nature ? Is man merely matter ? Is God only Nature ?

Materialism is no new interpretation of man or of nature. It can neither be faulted or commended as a novelty. Greece developed it, in forms which are closely reproduced among us to-day. India developed it, in very thorough-going tendencies of thought. This theory has, however, experienced a remarkable revival in our age, from the unprecedented study of the physical sciences. It is very much in vogue among those whose tests of all things, inside and outside of man, are the scalpel and the litmus paper. Many incline to it as a

secret persuasion, while not a few boldly and uncompromisingly avow it. The trend of thought through the physical sciences has seemed, for some time, to be making in this direction.

It is easy to understand such a trend in our modern thought. Matter, or that which we call matter, has taken on a new and astonishing grandeur, in the light of our discoveries in the physical sciences. What an infinite variety of forms it can take, from a pebble to an Alp, from a crystal to a sun, from a rhizopod to man! What an infinite variety of beauty it can assume; the iridescence of the dew-drops in the morning light, the sheen of a mountain tarn, the blue vault of the heavens, the flowers of the field and of the woods, the vistas of snow-fields seen through copses of pines and larches in an upper Alpine valley, the sublimity of an ocean storm, the grandeur of Niagara, the splendor of a sunrise, the glory of a sunset, a landscape of Turner, a Madonna of Raphael, a temple of Michael Angelo and the human form divine! What power it can put forth, as it thunders in the storm-clouds, as it lets slip the avalanche, as it sweeps in a tidal wave, as it lifts a continent in tremors and engulfs cities in an earthquake, as it thrusts square miles of solid limestone and granite thousands of feet in the air and twists their strata like the crumpled leaves of paper in a schoolboy's hand, veining the white marble with the red of its

fiery agony! What baffling mystery in its seemingly insensate elements; as the snow flakes form in beautiful geometrical figures; as, out of the filmy, transparent gluten, such as we watch in the jelly fish of the sea-shore, there rises, in orderly succession, plants and animals and man; as each organ of your body knows its special function and faithfully discharges it, one and the same material taking on widely different qualities and performing widely different services, according as it finds itself in ears or eyes, in stomach or in brain; as it builds worlds whose size staggers our imagination and whose distances silence arithmetic, under laws which bind infinitude into a beautiful order!

Truly this is no longer the "vile matter" of our old hymn books. In accordance with the pendulum principle of human movement, a cult of matter is plainly natural now. Nor would we care to find much fault with it if the pendulum did not swing so very far over. How far it swings is visible to any one who watches the movement of thought. Among cautious men of science, one may hear of the possibility of mind and matter being only the two faces of a mystic substance which is as yet unknown to us; but many thorough-going physicists sweep mind out of any real being, finding in it only the highest form of matter.

Man, they tell us, is the combination of certain earths and minerals in certain proportions. They

can weigh the phosphorus and iron and lime and all the other elements which enter into his composition, and can tell just how much of each it takes to make a man. They can write the chemical formula for man. What more would we ask of them? If we persist in bothering them about mind, they will take us into the laboratory where it is produced. This twisted coil of grayish tissue which constitutes the brain is the manufactory of thought.

Here imagination and reason, affection and conscience are turned out, as the products of this mechanism. The brain generates the power to think. It secretes thought, as the liver secretes bile. Compress the brain and you choke thought. Make a lesion of the tissue and you break the thread of thought. Reduce the size of the brain and you shrivel the mind. Starve the brain and you starve out mind. 'No phosphorus, no thought.' Mind is only a higher glow of phosphorus. Let the mechanism come to a stand-still in death, and all thought ceases. Mind is the highest product of matter. It has no existence apart from matter. Consciousness is only the peculiar impression that is produced by the movements of the molecules of the brain. Personal identity is but the central figure of the phantasmagoria that is conjured up as the brain atoms dance beneath the spell of the wizard force which is generated in these grayish coils.

Nature is not the rational outworking of intelli-

gence—intelligence is the incomprehensible out-working of nature. The mind of man is not the flowering of a process which started from the action of a higher mind. It is a flower which had no seed of its kind. It is the accidental issue of the blind processes of matter. The atoms have shuffled and whirled themselves into ever higher combinations, until they have grouped in the forms whose action and re-action evolve intelligence. I, as I speak, and you, as you listen, are but the latest phases thus far reached by the primordial sun-fires. In the language of the prophet of matter—"We may cross the boundary of experimental evidence, and discern in that matter which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all terrestrial life."*

God thus disappears out of the universe, as spirit has disappeared out of man. A physiologist once remarked—"The scalpel, in opening the brain, comes upon no soul." Laplace, at one time, said, in a similar strain, that in scanning the whole heavens with the telescope he had found no God.

Into these bleak and dark wastes of atheism does the pendulum-swing of our age towards materialism already carry us: the aphelion of the orbit of philosophy, let us believe, which we shall soon round,

* TYNDALL : Belfast Address.

and sweep down "the ringing grooves of change" into the light and warmth of the sun of truth.

The common sense of mankind may well be trusted to dispose, sooner or later, of this nightmare of materialism. It seems scarcely possible that such a belief can ever become the creed of mankind. A deeper philosophy will unquestionably arise, to meet this scientific materialism, as such a deeper philosophy has always arisen to meet similar theories in ages past. Wherever and whenever this theory has been broached, it has always been met by a deeper philosophy, giving a nobler and truer interpretation of man and of nature. We all know how Socrates reasoned it out of countenance, and how Plato led the thought of Greece to heights far above the plane where its enfeebling and demoralizing voice could be heard.

Meanwhile, to you, young men, who are in danger of being affected by this materialistic age, I would offer a few suggestions, which may aid you in staying yourselves against this present trend of thought.

I.

Physical science has not established the identification of mind and matter. An intimate connection between mind and matter has never been denied. Shame flushes the cheeks, sorrow dejects the countenance, joy makes the very step buoyant. On the

other hand, a fit of indigestion will paralyze imagination, and a torpid liver will make any man a pessimist. All this was perceived by the ancients as well as by us moderns, and has been recognized by those who believe in spirit as well as by those who believe alone in matter. Mind and matter are married in man, and there is as close a sympathy between those whom God hath joined together as ought to exist in a sacramental union.

Nor has it ever been denied that brain is the organ of mind—a wonderful organ, exquisitely adapted to the expression of thought, the masterpiece of the Almighty Hand. Believers in the existence of mind, as a substantial entity independent of this fleshly organization, have always been, therefore, obliged to admit that, if the organ were injured, the power of mind to find expression would be affected, and that, if the organ were destroyed, the power of mind to find expression would be destroyed—unless a new organ could be fashioned by nature. A lesion in the brain must stop thought, as a break in the wires of yonder key-board must stop the music of the organ. If the breath fails in the human body, the brain will cease to give forth thought; just as, if the breath fails in yonder orchestral box, the organ will cease to give forth music. But such a failure of breath—*i.e.*, death—no more proves that there was no intelligence presiding over the now dumb brain, than a sudden stoppage of the

mind in yonder box, leaving the organ mute in the midst of a *Te Deum*, would prove that our friend, the organist, was not sitting at the key-board, thrilling with the loftiest harmonies. If the whole organ fell to pieces and crumbled into dust before your eyes, and a dread silence chilled the church, you might argue, with your eyes shut, that he had been but a phantom, a spectral form, blown out into visibility by the breath of the organ, a visual impression shaped by the music that was ground out from the organ itself—as a thorough-going materialist should believe. But how would this ingenious theory stand his re-appearance at the key-board of a new organ, run up rapidly by Mr. Roosevelt's skilful workmen? A new organ found—the organist would prove himself alive, feeling in melodies and thinking in harmonies as before. What if death only calls the human mind away from before one organ, to preside over another and higher organ? Do you know anything to the contrary? Can you disprove the world-old instinct pointing to this belief, a belief which the deepest philosophy warrants? Unless you can, you prove nothing against the being of mind, in pointing to its silence when its organ breaks down in the human body.

The intimate connection between mind and matter has indeed been pushed very much further than of old. Sensation can be traced as a vibratory thrill, passed along the nerves from the external

world to the brain. The velocity of this vibratory thrill can be determined. Each thought or feeling or volition is seen to be accompanied with certain changes in the brain. We can almost weigh and measure these changes in the brain, according to the quantity and quality of intellectual labor. It is possible that we may hereafter locate each faculty in a certain part of the brain. It is even within the range of possibility that we may find a special sort of molecular vibration accompanying each variety of thought or feeling; and that we may yet watch the physical shadows of intellectual and emotional action, in a right-handed gyration of brain molecules when a man is loving, and in a left-handed gyration of these molecules when he is hating.

It is not surprising, therefore, that men are found ready to leap on ahead of such slow advances of actual knowledge, and to affirm the complete identification of mind and matter. But in taking this leap, they leap into a great gulf; a gulf so dark that no man can see across it, so wide that no spring, even of the scientific imagination, can clear it. High authorities in science authorize such a statement. Mr. Tyndall writes: "The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable. Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously; we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the

organ, which would enable us to pass, by a process of reasoning, from the one to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why. Were our minds and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain; were we capable of following all their motions, all their groupings, all their electric discharges, if such there be; and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling, we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem, How are these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness? The chasm between the two classes of phenomena would still remain intellectually impassable. Let the consciousness of *love*, for example, be associated with a right-handed spiral motion of the molecules of the brain, and the consciousness of *hate* with a left-handed spiral motion. We should then know when we love that the motion is in one direction, and when we hate that the motion is in the other; but the 'WHY?' would remain as unanswerable as before. * * * * The problem of the connection of body and soul is as insoluble in its modern form as it was in the pre-scientific ages." *

Every one will perceive, on a moment's reflection, the grounds for thus denying outright the possibility of identifying mind with matter. The qualities

* "Fragments of Science": pp. 119, 120.

of either cannot possibly be transferred to the other. You speak of the extension, the weight, the form and the color of a material object. Can you apply these terms to a mental object, a thought or a feeling? Is your thought now a mile long? Do your reasonings, as you follow me, weigh an ounce or a ton? Was your grief yesterday, at the loss of a friend, round or square? Will your joy to-morrow, in listening to Lohengrin, be red or green? The properties of matter cannot be transferred to mind without absurdity. The reverse is equally true, though I will not stop to illustrate it. One of the leading defenders of materialism admits this fact. "Mental and bodily states are utterly contrasted," says Mr. Bain. Again he writes: "Extension is but the first of a long series of properties all present in matter, all absent in mind." *

It is a fundamental proposition of knowledge that, in one and the same thing, totally dissimilar and contradictory properties cannot inhere. An object cannot be white and black, round and square, bitter and sweet. If a thing which is claimed to be one thing proves to have two totally unlike, thoroughly contradictory, wholly irreconcilable groups of qualities, you need no argument to satisfy you that it is in reality not one thing but two things. Two such mutually exclusive sets of properties must belong to two separate substances. Matter and mind, therefore, are two substances.

* "Mind and Body": pp. 124-125.

II.

Since there are, then, two distinct substances, mind and matter, we are obliged to choose between them, in attempting to fashion for ourselves an explanation of the meaning of creation, and a theory of its origination. We can give an interpretation of creation in terms of physics or in terms of spirit. Mind may be viewed as a product of matter, or matter may be viewed as a product of mind. Man may be, in the last analysis, resolved into a physical organization, developing intelligence, or into an intelligence, forming around itself a body. Nature may be resolved, in its last analysis, into a material system, evolving a beautiful order, or into the realization of a creative thought, the out-working of an Infinite Mind. Which will you choose, my young friends? As a help to this choice let me remind you of certain facts.

(1.) It is a fact that organization does not precede life in nature, but that life precedes organization. Your wonderful organization began in a living parent. Man himself, so say our savants, arose out of lower forms of animal life. Back through every lowering form of life, you can track your way until you come to the filmy transparent thread of gluten, which we call bioplasm—the apparently structureless, raw material of all living things. Out of what

did bioplasm arise? Out of previous bioplasm—that is, out of previous life, however simple and feeble.

If bioplasm could be proven, or even seriously believed, to have ever arisen out of dead matter—out of matter which was simply under physical and chemical laws and forces—then we might be materialists. But this we may not believe, much less expect to see proven—leading savants themselves being our authorities.

Mr. Huxley, who has cherished great hopes in a contrary direction, confesses, in his article on Biology in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*—"The chasm between the not living and the living, the present state of knowledge cannot bridge." Mr. Tyndall owns that, for the present at least, "the question of spontaneous generation is, I believe, practically set at rest for the scientific world."* We are then, in so far as a study of the origin of life goes, not yet warranted in ruling spirit out of man.

(2.) It is a fact that it is impossible to make matter hold "the promise and potency" of mind, without first endowing it with potential mind. Before matter can be conceived to hold any such promise of mind, the established definition of it must be forgotten, in the dream of a new and mystic substance. Nothing appears more clearly settled in physics than that inertia is a property of matter.

* Quoted in "Thoughts on Theism": p. 64.

Now inertia is the incapacity to originate motion—that is to evolve force. Yet matter, according to the materialist, originates the most astonishing forces. As we have already seen, scientists themselves admit that unliving matter shows no power to develop life, yet, upon this theory, matter is supposed to have the power to evolve all forms of life, even up to thought itself. If, as Mr. Tyndall affirms, “emotion, intellect, will and all their phenomena were once latent in a fiery cloud,” that fiery cloud must have been, to say the least, a most remarkable sort of cumulus or cirrus—utterly unlike any vapor known to us in the atmosphere around our earth. Such matter must indeed have been, as he adds—“essentially mystical and transcendental.” But then, such matter is not the matter of science, according to its established definition; and with the matter of imagination we have nothing to do.

So it is always. When the thorough-going evolutionist, who sees no crevice in his linked-law through which spirit might creep into matter, says—Give me a few million molecules and I will construct a universe; he plays a game of hocus-pocus with us. He slips mind under the cover where he showed you matter, and with it works his miracles. He first excludes mind from creation and then smuggles it in again, done up in tiny packages of most mental matter. He endows his molecules with gravitation and polarity; sorts them into differ-

ent classes, inorganic molecules, which can only change their place, and organic molecules, which can also change their order, as a globule turns itself inside out; and so on, until you cry, Halt!—if this is matter, I too am a materialist; for this matter has mentality. Such very smart matter as this can doubtless write a book proving that it is not mind, and then contemplate its own work in calm and happy consciousness. But why not call it mind at once? No wonder that such a true physicist as Clerk Maxwell, in his metrical satire on Mr. Tyn-dall's Belfast address, exhorts as follows:

“First, then, let us honor the atom, so lively, so wise, and so small.

The atomist, next, let us praise, Epicurus, Lucretius and all. Let us damn with faint praise Bishop Butler; in whom many atoms combined

To form that remarkable structure it pleased him to call—his mind.”

The same high authority declares of these molecules, which are depended upon by some to rule mind out of creation: “The quality of each molecule gives it the essential character of a manufactured article, and precludes the idea of its being eternal and self-existent.”*

(3.) It is a fact that we have no immediate and direct and first-hand knowledge of any substance

* Quoted in *The Spectator*, No. 2840.

but mind. We think that we know much about matter and little about mind. In reality, the truth is directly the reverse. All that we know of the outside world is—our consciousness of it. Objects make impressions on our minds and those impressions constitute our knowledge of nature. I strike this desk, and say that I know it is hard. What I mean is that, in the contact, a force is called forth which flashes a message along my nerves to my brain, and that my mind reads the message and becomes conscious of the resistance which I call the hardness of the table. The hardness of wood is a fact of mental consciousness. So with the color of these walls, with the music of the choir, with all my perceptions and sensations. All our knowledge of external nature is thus, in reality, a knowledge of the ideas and sensations that are awakened in our consciousness, through our relation to a somewhat outside of us. Mind holds a mirror up to nature and we see everything as imaged therein. We know nothing of external objects, save as they become forms of thought and feeling in ourselves. Physical science is a knowledge of the human intellect. Is it not rather of the nature of folly to turn away from the one substance of which we really know, to another substance of which we know directly nothing, in order to get a notion of the meaning of creation and of how it came into being?

Why, materialism itself is a thought, not a thing. It is an act of mind to prove that mind is matter.

(4.) It is a fact that you cannot prove that matter even so much as exists at all. Try it, if you wish to satisfy yourself. What you will succeed in proving concerning this desk, for example, is, not that it exists, but, that you are impressed by a somewhat which, in your mind, assumes the shape and color and resistance, together fashioning an image of a desk. The very existence of any material object is an inference from our mental consciousness. A correct impression, doubtless, of whose correctness, however, we are persuaded only by our trust in the affirmation of our mental consciousness. It would be easier to believe that there was no material world around us than to believe that there is no mind within us. And this I say, not as echoing the metaphysicians, but, as repeating the convictions of scientists themselves. Mr. Huxley goes so far, in his essay on Berkely, as to say of the bishop's argument: "I conceive that this reasoning is irrefragable. And, therefore, if I were obliged to choose between absolute materialism and absolute idealism, I should feel compelled to accept the latter alternative." * Is it not rather far-fetched to offer, as the interpretation of mind, that matter which we can only know exists through the affirmation of mind?

(5.) It is a fact that you can offer no intelligible

* "Critiques and Addresses," p. 314.

account of man or of the universe in terms of mere matter, while to explain either at all you are driven to speak in terms of mind. Materialism silences itself, when it tries to act as an interpreter of creation.

Try to frame a conception of either man or nature, as a mere material organization, and you land yourself in bottomless absurdity. The picture of the primordial molecules of matter proceeding to organize a world, as Lucretius drew it, and as we are familiar with it through the medium of the popular preachers of this new-old gospel, seems about as near a dream of craziness as most men can fancy. Through what happy-go-lucky dances will these gyrating atoms shake themselves into the beautiful order of such a universe? If, through endless casualties, they finally fall by accident into some forms of order, what is to secure them in their groupings? One success would be a marvel, but the marvel increases with each additional success of these unintelligent molecules. To fashion the forms of the crystals, through such a dance of atoms, would be to excite our admiration; but to go on and produce oceans and mountains and clouds and worlds, all moving in harmonious order; to go on yet further and mould plants and trees and flowers, birds and beasts, and, last of all, man—and all without intelligence, without thought, without plan, without purpose—this

is such a miracle of miracles as to be simply inconceivable. Conceive of these molecules as plastic in the hands of intelligence, as stamped by mind with its own high thought, as charged by reason with its far-reaching plan, as endowed by a supreme will with its resistless force—and all becomes intelligible. Over against the blind dance of Lucretius' inanimate atoms, set the intelligent movements of Emerson's animate atoms, and there is a passage as from darkness to light.

“ The journeying atoms,
Primordial wholes,
Firmly draw, firmly drive,
By their *animate poles*.”

It is an open secret that the crystals build their structures in geometrical forms. “A crystal is frozen geometry.” There is, then, geometry in the atoms, or in some power back of them. It is an open secret that the laws of the physical universe are mathematical. There is, then, a science of mathematics in the atoms, or in some power back of them. In the noble language of Clerk Maxwell: “Molecules continue this day as they were created, perfect in number, measure, and weight, and, from the ineffaceable characters impressed on them, we may learn that those aspirations after accuracy in measurement and justice in action which we reckon among our noblest attributes as man, are ours

because they are essential constituents of the image of Him who, in the beginning, created, not only the heaven and the earth, but the materials of which heaven and earth consist." * Nothing is more certain than that nature is a book which requires mind to read. The dog does not see the beauty of the sunset or the order of the stars. The further we read in this book the more mind is required to interpret it aright. If it takes mind to read this book could it have taken no mind to write it? Mr. Tyndall confesses: "I have noticed, during years of self-observation, that it is not in hours of clearness and vigor that this doctrine (materialistic atheism) commends itself to my mind; that in the presence of stronger and healthier thought it ever dissolves and disappears, as offering no solution of the mystery in which we dwell, and of which we form a part." † . The only sane solution of creation is that of our great seer:

"For out of Thought's interior sphere,
These wonders rose in upper air."

Well may he say to us:

"Enough for thee the primal mind
That flows in streams, that breathes in wind."

* Quoted in *The Spectator*, December 2, 1882.

† Preface to "Belfast Address."

(6.) It is a fact that materialism stultifies itself, intellectually. If thought be only molecular movements, why is one thought truer, wiser, more noble than another thought; *i.e.*, wherein is one molecular movement truer, wiser, nobler than another molecular movement? What standard have we left even of molecular movements?

If we know the existence and characteristics of external nature only through the affirmations of consciousness, how can we impeach consciousness without impeaching all our knowledge—physical science itself? Now consciousness affirms the reality of a spirit in man, and the reality of the being of God. You can refuse the testimony of consciousness on these points only by questioning its general veracity—*i.e.*, by evacuating all knowledge of reality. To doubt the being of your spirit or of God is possible only by doubting your own doubt, and then you land in universal scepticism.

(7.) It is a fact that materialism proves an unworkable hypothesis, morally. Until we can prove a hypothesis true, we may be satisfied if we can prove it workable. The practical question concerning any theory is—Will it work? This is as valid in ethics as in physics. The theory of man which will not work among men, in human society, cannot be true.

The belief in the reality of a spirit in man works. It teaches men to subdue the flesh under the spirit,

to subordinate selfishness to brotherliness, to master greed by justice, to curb brutal hatreds with law. It makes possible a human society. The belief in a Divine Spirit teaches men patience under sorrows, and endurance of wrongs. It inspires courage, hope and faith. These beliefs have worked thus far in history, under sore odds. How will materialism work? It resolves all ideals into illusions, all aspirations into vanities. It draws the pith out of duty. It discharges the will of force, and chains it in the slavery of necessity. It takes the crown off from the brow of Conscience, and dethrones the king which ruled by right divine over the mob of passions and appetites. An Epicurus writes its philosophy and a Swinburne writes its poetry. Who writes its social science? A Nihilist—Bakounine. What is that new science of society? Anarchy. The philosophic principle of Nihilism is avowed materialism. “Man, like all living nature, is an entirely material being. The mind * * * is a property of the animal body.”* Its practical conclusion is: “I come to advance to you a new gospel. * * * The old world must be destroyed. * * * The beginning of all those lies which have ground down this poor world in slavery is, God. * * * The second lie is Right. * * * When you have freed your mind from the fear of a God and

* “God and the State”: MICHAEL BAKOUNINE; tr. by B. R. Tucker, p. 40.

from that childish respect for the fiction of Right, then all the remaining chains which bind you, and which are called science, civilization, property, marriage, morality and justice, will snap asunder like threads."* Materialism, then, is a solvent of all faiths, of all ideas and of all laws; under which social order lapses back into chaos. Herr Most is its prophet. His panacea is dynamite. Thus, before our very eyes, materialism runs to seed in anarchy. Plainly it is a theory which will not work in society.

(8.) It is a fact that leading physicists have already begun to define matter in terms of spirit. Savants speak now of matter as "centres of force." Science tends plainly to conceive of nature as a manifestation of force. In an address given in this country not long ago, the distinguished physiologist, Dr. Carpenter, declared: "It is not so many years ago that several of our ablest mathematicians and physicists were expressing every mechanical phenomenon in terms of *motion*, thus departing from the paths marked out by Newton, who expressed them in terms of *force*. I am glad to say that, in this and in other departments of physical science, men are now returning to the thought that it is in terms of *energy* or effective force that the phenomena of nature are to be expressed. Modern science, moreover, grasps the idea of the unity of the forces of nature. There is not one force called

* BAKOUNINE: *Nineteenth Century* for Jan., 1880.

electricity, another called heat, another called chemistry. These are merely modes of expression of certain manifestations of the great energy of nature, which it is necessary to classify and arrange. All scientific men now accept the doctrine that energy is one, and that there is neither beginning nor cessation of its action.”* We speak now of force, in the singular. The various forces are but changing forms of one force. This one force is the constant factor in the universe—a changing changelessness; the permanent element in nature; which was before all present organizations took shape, and which will be after they disappear; so that, as has been well said, “We may conclude that force has all the attributes of a thing eternal and uncreated.”

What conception can we form of this mystery of force? The only conception which we can possibly form of it is given us in our own consciousness. This connects every action with an exertion, and identifies energy with the forth-putting of will. The great astronomer Herschel saw this, when he declared—“that it is our own immediate consciousness of *effort* when we exert force, to put matter in motion, or to oppose and neutralize force, which gives us this internal conviction of *power* and *causation*, so far as it refers to the material world, and compels us to believe that whenever we see material objects put in motion from a state of rest, or

* *The Christian Register*: Sept. 28, 1882.

deflected from their rectilinear paths and changed in their velocities if already in motion, it is in consequence of such *effort somehow* exerted, though not accompanied with our consciousness."*

Dr. Carpenter declares that we are compelled to look upon force as will. What else could he say as a physiologist? And is not physiology the science of the highest organization known to us, the science of the body of man? Is not the conception of force which it makes necessary the highest that is possible to us? Mr. Spencer admits this. He writes: "All other modes of consciousness are derivable from experiences of force; but experiences of force are not derivable from anything else. Thus the force by which we ourselves produce changes, and which serves to symbolize the cause of changes in general, is the final disclosure of analysis."† So that Mr. Martineau is warranted by science itself in affirming—"Force is will, from which *we omit* all reference to the living thought; but its objective character is unaffected by this subjective default."‡ In the midst of his great work on physiology, Dr. Carpenter pauses to declare: "When we have once arrived at that conception of *force* as an expression of *will*, which we derive from our own experience of its production, the universal and constantly sustain-

* Quoted in *Con. Rev.*, March, 1876, p. 533.

† "First Principles": p. 170.

‡ "Essays," I: 141.

ing agency of the Deity is recognized in every phenomenon of the external universe ; and we are thus led to feel that, in the material creation itself, we have the same distinct evidence of His personal existence and ceaseless activity, as we have of the agency of intelligent minds in the creations of artistic genius, or in the elaborate contrivances of mechanical skill, or in those written records of thought which arouse our own psychical nature into kindred activity.”*

Thus, led by science, we turn to the holy place within each of us for the highest truth, and there we confront the spirit which is in man, and in its presence stand face to face with an Infinite and Eternal Spirit, even—God. “The descent into our inmost being is at the same time an ascent into God.” The father of English science, Lord Bacon, thus opens his *Essay on Atheism*: “I had rather believe all the fables in the legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind. * * * It is true that a little philosophy inclineth man’s mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men’s minds about to religion.”†

* “*Human Physiology*”: p. 545.

† “*Works*” of LORD BACON: I: p. 24.

III.

Were there time, it would be a delightful task to confirm this mountain-vision, up to which science laboriously leads us, by the revelation given through the immortals of earth ; those sons of the morning who, without the toilsome climb of reason, take the wings of imagination and fly to the lofty and serene heights whence they sweep the horizon of knowledge. The seers of earth have never been materialists. The great poets have always seen a spirit in man, and in nature the Spirit Infinite and Eternal. Wordsworth muses by the ruins of Tintern Abbey thus :

“ And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused ;
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion *and a spirit* that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.”

Emerson gathers into one immortal song the secrets which he had heard whispered in the still, small voice of the Wood Notes ; and here it is :

“ Thou seekest in globe and galaxy,
He hides in pure transparency ;

Thou askest in fountains and in fires,
He is the essence that enquires.
He is the axis of the star ;
He is the sparkle of the spar ;
He is the heart of every creature ;
He is the meaning of each feature :
And his mind is the sky,
Than all it holds more deep, more high."

Shall we not then say, with Lowell—to whom
may his own faith of happier days come with angel-
whispers, now that he is overwhelmed in sorrow :

"God of our fathers, thou who wast,
Art, and shalt be, when the eye-wise who flout
Thy secret presence shall be lost
In the great light that dazzles them to doubt ;
We, who believe Life's bases rest
Beyond the probe of chemic test,
Still, like our fathers, feel Thee near."

NOTE.—In a lecture recently delivered in Glasgow, the Duke of Argyll said : " In the last year of his life Dr. Darwin did me the honor of calling upon me in London, and I had a long and interesting conversation with that distinguished observer of nature. In the course of conversation I said it was impossible to look at the wonderful processes of nature which he had observed, without seeing that they were the effect and expression of mind. I shall never forget Mr. Darwin's answer. He looked at me hard, and said : ' Well it often comes over me with overpowering force, but at other times (and he shook his head) it seems to go away.' "

VIII.

DESIGN IN NATURE.

“The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament sheweth His handy-work.”—Psalm xix : 1.

THE Scotch philosopher, Beattie, showed himself a real philosopher, by the method to which he resorted in order to impress his young child's mind with the belief in God. With true wisdom, he had refrained from talking lightly to his baby-boy upon the supreme truth which man can grasp, waiting for the right time and the fit opportunity to make the first deep impression upon the child-soul. When the right time appeared to him to have been reached, his father prepared an object-lesson in religion, on this wise. In a corner of his garden, he drew with his finger on the soft earth, one day, the three initial letters of his child's name, and then, sowing cresses in the furrows, he covered the seeds and smoothed the earth, so that no sign of his action might appear. “Ten days after,” he writes, “the child came running to me, all amazed, and told me that his name had grown in the garden. I smiled at these words, and appeared not to attach much importance to what he had said. But he in-

sisted on taking me to see what had happened. 'Yes,' said I, on coming to the place, 'I see well enough that it is so; but there is nothing wonderful in this—it is a mere accident;' and I went away." The little fellow's mind was thoroughly excited, however, by the wonder, and he felt his way, with a true instinct, to a better conclusion. He followed his father, and walking beside him said very seriously, "That cannot be an accident. Some one must have sown those seeds. They would not make my name of themselves." The wise father turned his eyes upon the child's enquiring face, and said—"So you think that seeds could not shape themselves into the letters of your name by chance?" "Yes," said the boy, thoughtfully. The delighted father directed the talk to the child's hands, and proceeded to show him somewhat of the wonderfulness of them, their invaluable usefulness to him, and the curious adaptations by which they were made ready for his service. Then he led him to think of the other members of his body, so "fearfully and wonderfully made." When he was through, he asked him whether he thought that his body could have grown by chance. The child mused, and then answered—"No; some one must have made it for me." "Who is that one?" said the father. The little fellow said that he did not know. And then, as the philosopher-father writes, "I made known to him the name of the great Being who made all the

world, and regarding His nature, gave him all the instruction that could be adapted to his age." We need not be surprised that he adds—"The lesson struck him profoundly, and he has never forgotten either it or the circumstance that was the occasion of it."*

A very simple lesson this, as to the being of God, but one which other and greater philosophers have used to disprove atheism. When the pert little atheist, Aristodemus, talked big in the streets of Athens, Socrates easily refuted him by this very argument. If the statues of Polycletus and the pictures of Zeuxis could not have fashioned themselves, how much less could the human body have shaped itself into its noble beauty. Cicero appealed to this same instinct in man, which refuses to believe that an order can come into being without an orderer. Since men did not hesitate to see, in anything which moved by mechanism, the work of reason, they should not assign 'the regular movements of the heavenly host' to chance. Every one knows how Paley used a watch to prove design, and how he turned this reasoning to establish design in the more wonderful mechanism of Nature.

The argument from design has ever commended itself most strongly to the human mind. It is the argument by which most men satisfy themselves of the being of God. The adaptations and contriv-

* "Final Causes" : JANET ; p. 212.

ances of nature seem to prove, beyond question, a planning Mind. In each of them men "see a thought realized, and thus recognize a forethought."

Has our modern knowledge exhausted nature of the traces of design? Has its dry light bleached out from the fabric of creation these fine water-marks of the 'maker of heaven and earth?' It is undeniable that this argument seems to have lost favor with many of those who are familiar with the physical sciences. Why is this? If this loss of confidence in the ancient argument is valid, it must be either because the facts on which it had rested have been proven to be no facts, or because the inferences that had been drawn from them have been proven to be false inferences. Has science dispossessed nature of its marvels of adaptation, or has it caused them to lose their look of being the contrivance of a Creative Mind?

I.

Has the progress of scientific knowledge rendered this argument from design obsolete, by dispossessing nature of the facts on which it had based its claims?

On the contrary, marks of adaptation and tokens of contrivance are still found on every hand. Our fathers were doubtless mistaken in some of the supposed facts on which they rested their argument

from design ; and other facts, which were formerly adduced as indications of adaptation, do not impress us as conclusively as they once impressed our fathers. The famous Bridgewater Treatises would need considerable re-editing to suit the changed outlook in some of the sciences. But, if some counts have dropped out from this argument against atheism, other counts have been inserted. New and even more astonishing tokens of adaptation have come to light, with the wider knowledge of our day ; and many of the old examples of contrivance have taken on an added impressiveness in our fuller light. The new edition of the Bridgewater Treatises could draw from astronomy and geology, from botany and zoology and from every field of science, their illustrations of the working of a Power capable of conceiving designs, and of carrying them out with unwearied patience and exhaustless wisdom.

You will recognize the truth of this statement in the field of science with which you may be most familiar. Let me give you one illustration of it.

The eye of man has always furnished natural theology one of its most striking illustrations of design. It is an optical instrument so wonderfully adapted to the actual needs of man that it seems as impossible to resist the inference of a maker as it is impossible to resist a like inference when you stand in Hunter's store and examine the latest novelty in field or marine glasses. Open any work upon phys-

iology and inform yourself as to the merits of this optical instrument which nature has presented to every one of us, and you will perceive that the optician, in the advances of his science, is only treading in the steps of the Power which fashioned the eye. Like the photographer's camera, the eye has a "small, dark chamber, open to the light only in the front, with a screen (the retina) properly placed in the back part, and the whole lined with a black absorbing substance which completely prevents reflection or reverberation of light within the chamber." * In the camera which man makes there is a remarkable contrivance to secure the two conditions for a perfect image, viz., distinctness of impression and sufficiency of light. A small hole will allow of the formation of a distinct image of a man, but it will be faint. A larger hole will admit more light, and thus make the image brighter, but the form of the image will lose distinctness. To secure the perfect combination of distinctness and brightness the optician has invented the lens—that wonderful instrument whose action I cannot pause to explain, and need not, as every one knows generally of its properties. The human eyes have such lenses. The ordinary lens has a defect which any prism will illustrate; that of fringing an object with the colors into which the light is broken. To rem-

* "Religion and Science": LE CONTE; ch. II.; from which this description of the eye's adaptations is drawn.

edy this defect the optician uses two lenses, one convex and the other concave; the two lenses being so related, as to their curvatures and their materials, that they secure a proper adjustment between their differing dispersive and refractive powers. The human eye secures the correction of this defect in the same way—by using two convex lenses and one concave lens; consisting of materials of different refractive and dispersive powers, so related to one another that their combination completely corrects the chromatism which must otherwise have disturbed the clearness of vision. Another defect in the lens results from the fact that the rays which fall on its marginal portion and those which fall on its central portion are refracted unequally; and thus the distinctness which grows out of a perfect focalizing of all the rays is lost. Two methods of correcting this defect—spherical aberration—have been devised. One of these has been successfully applied by opticians, and its application is counted a peculiar triumph. The other method no art of man has succeeded as yet in applying. This secret has been discovered by Nature, and has been used in the human eye. Another difficulty has caused practical trouble to every one who has used a photographer's camera or a telescope. To secure a perfect image the screen must be placed exactly at the focal point. But objects at different distances before the camera focalize at different distances behind

the lens. There must be some method of securing focal adjustment. This may be done in either one of two ways. The screen may be moved backward and forward, as in the photographer's camera or the spy-glass; or changeable lenses, of greater or less refractive power, may be introduced, as in the microscope. The human eye was formerly supposed to use the first of these methods; lengthening or shortening for near or distant objects, and thus throwing the screen back or bringing it forward. The eye is now seen to act in the second manner; only, instead of the clumsy contrivance of taking out one lens and putting in another, the same lens is made capable of taking on different forms and thus of adapting itself perfectly to your book or to the sun. Nature does not provide you with a pocket full of lenses, but she supplies you with a set of lenses which can serve for a one-inch lens or for a 95,000,000-mile lens. This comparison can be pursued much further. Nature, like art, provides her camera with a means of regulating the amount of light admitted; with a covering to protect the instrument when not in use; with an arrangement for wiping it, so as to keep it clear; with a contrivance for rapid movement in all directions; with a pair of cameras, which produce the beautiful effects of relief, of depth of space and of the relative distance of objects, which man effects by the stereoscope; and with other equally ingenious devices

for making the eye as perfect an optical instrument as practicable. How impossible it seems for the human mind not to argue, from such an instrument, the action of a Divine Optician!

As with the eye, so is it with the other mechanisms of nature, which have always filled man with wonder. The more we know of the secrets of the science which underlies any art of man, the more we wonder at the skill which nature displays, and the more we are persuaded that a science underlies her art also.

II.

Has science faulted the logic of the argument from design? Has it removed from the marvels of nature their look of purposed contrivance? Many of its disciples answer, "yes," to this question. As evidences to this effect they adduce the following considerations, among others.

(I.) The imperfections of the adaptations in nature seem to disprove a Divine Designer. Some of the beautiful mechanisms of nature turn out to be by no means perfect. Our organs are instruments which, as has been said, are "at once admirable and rude." The eye itself proves to be far from an ideally finished instrument. Shallow scepticism exaggerates these imperfections, and concludes that the Power in nature is less skilful than man. More

careful reflection satisfies us that the very imperfection may be a condition of practical usefulness. The function of the eye is not to make delicate experiments but to serve our daily needs. Those needs require neither a telescope nor a microscope. A telescope or a microscope would be a most unserviceable eye. "A reasonable man will not take a razor to cleave blocks." A finer instrument would have been less practically useful. Every unnecessary refinement would have made it more cumbrous or more liable to injury. The limitations of the eye turn out to be conditions of its usefulness for the daily needs of man. Moreover, were we able to show how a better eye could be made for man's actual needs, that would only disprove the old and faulty notion of the Infinite Mind, as a mere artificer. The eye is not turned out as a spy-glass from an optician's work-shop; it is a development, wrought by the mysterious forces and processes of Life. It is not made—it is grown. We must learn to translate the design-argument from terms of industry to terms of life; and to think of God, not as a craftsman, standing over an object, but, as an intelligent Spirit, working from within an object; or rather as an Intelligence, endowing an object with so much of His thought as enables it to make itself, slowly and gradually.

(2.) The existence of useless organs seems to disprove design. So long as every organ appeared to

have a useful function to discharge, and every member seemed to play a needful part in the mechanism, it was easy to infer purposed adaptation. Now that we find some organs which disclose no function, and parts of the structure which are, apparently, of no use; how can one infer such purposed adaptation? There are, however, few organs of which we can positively affirm that they have no use—even though that use, as in the case of the spleen, does not disclose itself to us as yet.

There are more abundant examples of what are known as rudimentary organs—organs which exist, in partial development, in an organism where they are of no use, though having a use in other organisms where they exist fully developed. You have often noticed your horse shake his skin in summer, and thus throw off the flies that were troubling him. You have on your body the same membranous muscle, attached to your skin, but it is of no use. *You* cannot shake your skin as the horse does, though the flies pester you never so badly. How can such uselessness be reconciled with design? Not at all, if each organism is a piece of work turned out fresh from the Divine Workman's hands, complete and perfect. But each organism, on the contrary, is the product of a vast mechanism, which is turning out such works by the myriads; the mechanism itself being, not an invention freshly patented as a brand-new discovery, but, a structure which has been

slowly fashioned, through tentative essays—the highest form thus far reached in the development of an idea which was originally very simple. Nature works like man; developing an elaborate mechanism from a rude instrument; not throwing away the early type, when a further improvement suggests itself, but adding one improvement after another upon the original thought, until a very complex instrument is reached. Such a mechanism will of necessity preserve many features which have lost the usefulness that they once had—like the strange machine in the garret of some genius, on which he has spent a lifetime's toil. When you see an Indian steering his canoe by his paddle in the stern of his boat, you see the germ of the elaborate steering gear of a Cunarder. Man preserves the type, and works out slowly a more complex instrument. If each stage in the development of the steamer's steering-gear was stereotyped, so to speak, and the boat or ship having it was endowed with the power of reproducing boats and ships after its kind, we should have a host of vessels in the world which preserved, in their arrangement of steering, features which were not adapted to their actual needs; and this would seem to argue the absence of any mind in man, planning rudders.

Nature follows her original type, in her successive improvements, and thus there occur features of the structure which are but souvenirs of the primitive

plan. She sets before herself a general type, to which she adheres, and thus of necessity adapts it to different exigencies, as they arise in her different creatures. The fin of the fish, the paw of the reptile, the wing of the bird, the fore-foot of the quadruped, and the hand of man are one and the same original organ, adapted to widely different uses. The higher form may preserve traces of the lower, which are of no use to it, but which serve at least to remind us of nature's rough drafts of her wonderful work.

(3.) The existence of forms of life which, so far from serving the organisms in which they are found, are actually hostile to it, seems effectually to rule out design. Indispensable organs of certain animals are so formed as, not only to be very defective for the purpose which they seem to subserve, but to bring about positive misfortunes for those creatures. The bee and the wasp protect themselves by their stings; yet their stings are so barbed that, when deeply plunged into the body of an enemy, they cannot be pulled out; and the bee or the wasp which has vigorously harpooned its foe can get away from it only by tearing its own viscera; thus ensuring death. Monstrosities look like a caricature upon a designing mind. Parasites, spawning in the organisms of the vegetable and animal world, present perhaps the most puzzling of all the difficulties in the way of believing in a creative design.

To these several objections one general demurrer may be made. If nature were all clear to our ken, could we believe it to be the working of an Infinite Mind? Can we expect, as yet, to read, without halting, the riddle of Creation? Our knowledge is too scant to escape puzzles, as we follow the ways of the Most High. We can, however, see somewhat of light on these dark places in the argument of design. Nature is working upon a fixed system of laws, in set ways; and this, in such an imperfect stage of development as earth has reached, must bring about a host of anomalies, which may none the less fit into the general scheme, as seen in a bird's-eye view of the ages. There must needs be, in an imperfect adaptation of a general plan to special cases, apparent disorders, which may after all turn out incipient orders. In any order, there must be temporary exceptions to its rules, which prove nothing against those rules. If the argument from design proves valid in other respects, we must wait in patience for further light upon such perplexities. And, in so doing, we have the warrant of such high authority as Mr. Darwin; who cautions his readers, in one place, against a rash overconfidence in interpreting nature, whose full sweep of action we are so far from having discovered.

(4.) The fact that these adaptations of nature are brought about mechanically seems to disprove design. "Nature is a vast and complex mechan-

ism," men say, "which turns out these products that we call organisms. That enginery runs by physical forces. Its results are purely mechanical." There is a big assumption here, concerning which what I have said in a previous sermon may well be remembered. But, even granting that nature is a mere mechanism, does it follow that its wonderful products are not works of design? On the contrary, the more completely nature takes on the look of a mechanism, the more certainly, when we see it turning out products which imply design, are we convinced that that mechanism itself is the work of Mind, and that its products are the result of design.

I stood, a few years ago, in the International Exhibition in Paris, before a picture of *The Day*; which, at first, as I approached it, I took to be a painting, but which proved to be the fabric of a loom. It was the finest and most beautiful piece of machine-work which I have ever seen. Now, if this picture had been an oil-painting, no one would have attempted to prove to me that it had taken shape without the thought of some artist-mind. Some one, however, might have said to me—"How foolish to imagine that this picture implies any design, any adaptation of the woollen stuffs and the dyes out of which it is composed, to form such a lovely vision! It is all the blind result of a machine which I can show you; a most wonderful

machine, doubtless, which may well fill us both with awe, but which plainly runs itself. As to how it came to be, there is no use in your inquiring. It probably always was ; or, if it ever began to be, in the far past, it builded itself. It is the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms." So I might have followed my practical friend, and stood before the huge loom, wondering at its complex mechanism, watching the fabric roll forth and grow into another picture of *The Day*. Could any reasoning have persuaded me that this picture was not as much a work of design as the painting in the atelier which I had just left ? Could I have refused to see the traces of a planning hand in the cards which directed the movements of the threads to such an issue ?

I might have concluded to study the workings of this mysterious mechanism. It went on, day after day, turning out the same picture, without ever growing confused ; and then, one day, it suddenly began to weave a wholly different pattern, and continued to throw off this new picture of *Night*, without ever dropping back to the first figure. I would then have been perfectly sure that there was but one solution of the mystery of such a fact—there was a different design in the loom. The machine remained the same but a new design was inserted.

There is no other conclusion possible concerning Nature's mechanism. What makes one little cell

grow into a dog, and another, which no skill of man can distinguish from it, into a horse? What keeps the mechanism of one apple-seed always turning out one kind of apple-tree, and the mechanism of another apple-seed, which you cannot tell from the first, always turning out another variety of apple-tree? Plainly, different patterns have been slid into the two mechanisms. Some intelligence has been behind the enginery of life.

(5.) Passing by all other objections to the argument from design, let us face the difficulty which is raised by the magnificent generalization which we call evolution. The organs which we so admire, with all their beautiful adaptations, are, in reality, so say our wise men, the result of a process which forbids the thought of there being in any organ a purposed contrivance to its present use. The higher organisms have been slowly evolved from the most simple organisms, even from the apparently structureless substance which is the raw material of life. This development has gone on slowly, gradually, blindly and as by chance. Changing conditions have induced changes in the organism, slight and almost imperceptible. Hosts of such minute modifications have been ever taking place. Most of these results have proved unsatisfactory, and so have failed to enable the organisms in which they occurred to preserve life, and thus to perpetuate these changes. Such results have been thrown

aside in the movement of life. By successive changes, each of which was in turn so slight as to be almost imperceptible, other modifications have assumed proportions of importance. New organs and members have thus developed. The organisms in which they took place, succeeding through them in the struggle of existence, have perpetuated themselves. This movement of life results in as many failures as successes, only the failures disappear and are forgotten. Such a movement of life does not look like the straight aim of a conscious intelligence, but rather like the gropings of a blind power, feeling its way in the dark, and stumbling along, luckily striking on the upward path, after trying every possible road. Its thoughts are guesses; its works—happy hints of chance. The action of a law of heredity, in conjunction with a law of variability, accounts for the results which we see now in nature.

Granting all that is assumed in such a statement, which fairly enough puts the main points of the case of evolution, the conclusion by no means follows.

Let us first glance at the application of such a conception of nature's processes to the eye—the classical illustration of design. According to this theory, a nerve that was sensitive to the rays of the sunlight was the germ of the human eye. The changes wrought in this nerve through this sensitiveness to light, preserved and perpetuated, in the

case of the happiest results, nature has at length wrought so wonderful an instrument as the human eye. Admit the fact of the process and you have gained no explanation whatever of it. How utterly inconceivable would be such a mighty process were it not the plan of the Power which has been thus patiently at work. Here are laws and forces working together through ages towards such a beautiful optical instrument as the human eye. Here is a Power which manages to hold on to every improvement that is struck out, and to perpetuate it; which thus adds, in the slow increments of the ages, one improvement to another, until practical perfection is wrought. What can you make of this Power, if you do not attribute to it design? It works through a mechanism, but so does the inventor of the great loom which turns out the picture of The Day. Was there no thought of the human eye before the Nature which worked so straight to this result?

Mr. Huxley thus puts the famous argument of the watch, in the light of modern science:—"Suppose only that one had been able to show that the watch had not been made directly by any person, but that it was the result of the modification of another watch, which kept time poorly, and that this, again, had proceeded from a structure which could hardly be called a watch at all, seeing that it had no figures on the dial and the hands were rudi-

mentary; and that, going back and back, in time we came to a revolving barrel, as the earliest traceable rudiment of the whole fabric. And imagine that all these changes had resulted, at first, from a tendency of the structure to vary indefinitely, and, secondly, from something in the surrounding world which helped all variations in the direction of an accurate time-keeper, and checked all these in other directions, and then it is obvious that the force of Paley's argument would be gone; for it would be demonstrated that an apparatus thoroughly well adapted to a particular purpose might be the result of a method of trial and error worked by unintelligent agents, as well as of the direct application of the means appropriate to that end."*

This seems, at first sight, very conclusive. But, pause a moment, and ask yourself whether a "revolving barrel," which you had observed develop into a watch, keeping accurate time, was not, after all, a greater wonder than a watch which you had seen, in a factory, take shape out of the materials which compose it, beneath the hands of skilful workmen? And would you be any the less persuaded that some intelligence had been working out the idea of such a watch than that some intelligence had been busied over the watch which was made in the factory? Recall Mr. Huxley's language, and you will see that he does not escape from this sense

* "Lay Sermons": p. 330.

of a power shaping the revolving barrel towards the watch, even though the shaping is done through physical forces, which seem to have no design before them. "Imagine," he writes, "that all these changes had resulted, first, from a tendency of the structure to vary indefinitely, and, secondly, *from something in the surrounding world which helped all variations in the direction of an accurate time-keeper, and checked all those in other directions.*" Why here is a mystic somewhat, after all, forcing on the process in certain lines, guiding all modifications towards an end, and that end the marvel of a watch. The forces may be "unintelligent agents," but so is the steam which works the loom an unintelligent agent. The "something" putting the idea into the mechanism, in either case, is intelligence; in the one case, man, and in the other, God.

Mr. Huxley speaks in another place, of "the formative impulse" in nature. Certainly there is such a formative impulse working in creation—an impulse which fashions forms thus beautiful, thus admirably adapted to their uses. Can the impulse which thus forms, have no pattern after which it is forming? Then we have simply the old notion of chance, which the human mind cannot receive. If nature had begun in chaos, in formlessness, what are the probabilities that it would have groped its way into such a beautiful order?

Study the development of any one of Nature's

organisms, and you will see how impossible it is to avoid Mr. Huxley's simile, when watching the changes taking place in a speck of protoplasm:—"the plastic matter undergoes changes, so rapid and yet so steady and purpose-like in their succession, that one can compare them only to those operated by a *skilful modeller* upon a formless lump of clay. As *with an invisible trowel* the mass is divided. * * * And then, it is *as if a delicate finger traced out the line* to be occupied by the spinal column, and moulded the contour of the body." * We come back to the old child-thought, though now in a vastly more imposing form. Whether the Infinite Power acts directly, as the workman upon each special object; or whether He works indirectly, through the marvellous mechanisms which He has called into being, and into which He slips His creative thoughts, as patterns to guide their physical forces—in either case we have a Divine Designer.

Evolution does not drop out the conception of design, even when we study special organs. Still less does it do so when we study the sweep of the general order of life. It is in the fact of a general order, with its beautiful harmonies, even more than in the adaptation of special organs, that we see the tokens of a purpose. Everywhere we find a reign of Law. Wherever Science discovers this reign of Order, she reveals an Imperial Purpose back of

* "Lay Sermons"; p. 261.

every regnant Law. The fact of law is an evidence of Mind. The ordered relationship of parts into "one stupendous whole," the exquisite harmonies which result from their inter-relationships, these and all the other aspects of the beautiful order of Creation are unmistakable marks of Purpose.

The method of the process in which this order has been reached does not invalidate the reasonings which affirm design in it. The fact that through such seemingly blind gropings Life has, after all, advanced into ever nobler forms, pushing forward towards perfection, as to the completion of a thought—this fact, which evolution establishes beyond peradventure, becomes the supreme argument for a Purpose in Nature. What though Nature makes abortive attempts, unsuccessful experiments, failures which are thrown aside upon the debris-heap of worlds—she comes out right at last! What though her movement shows all sorts of blind motions; a feeling out in all directions, as though guessing and not thinking her way; a halting, now, as on a false scent, and then a retracing of her steps, as from a trail that led nowhither; yet the main line of progress is always recovered, and she pushes steadily onward the organic ascent of life. From the zoophytes to man, life gropes its way upward, insistently, successfully. Its course may not be an air-line. It may wind in and out, around the innumerable obstacles of "environment," but it se-

cures its direction after every detour, comes round to its course after every variation, and makes toward the goal of manhood. It is not in the eddies which swirl around the rocks that we are to seek the meaning of the stream, but in the deep, steady sweep onward, over every barrier, toward the sea.

Upon this essential feature of evolution we rest our belief in design. Whatever the primal germs, in them were capacities for unfolding life, through ascending planes. Out of the interactions of these struggling forces, there came conditions favoring, on the whole, the progress upward. Amid the manifold paths open to the forces which were working out their potentialities, there was somehow the instinct to choose the main road upward. Tempted ever aside, diverging into many a *cul de sac* in which there was only stationariness, from which there had to be retreat in order to advance, leaving thus upon the upward pathway the relics of these fruitless experiments, the highway is kept, and life progresses. Is it rational to conceive of this passage along such a tremulous hair-line, in the poise of confidence, as the action of a blind, unintelligent force? Is it possible to witness the gradual evolution of an order as beautiful as the earth presents; to behold the upward-rising life flowering at last into human consciousness; to find, along the entire ascent, all things working together for this education—and yet

hesitate to see, in such a process, the design of Intelligence?

The authority of leading scientists may reassure us, if we, naturally, doubt our own ability to read aright the bearings of evolution upon the argument of design. Mr. Huxley declares: "There is a wider teleology which is not touched by the doctrine of evolution, but is actually based upon the fundamental proposition of evolution." Mr. Huxley writes in the same essay of Darwin: "But perhaps the most remarkable service to the philosophy of biology rendered by Mr. Darwin is the reconciliation of teleology and morphology, and the explanation of the facts of both, which his views offer." * Mr. Fiske writes: "The Darwinian theory, properly understood, replaces as much teleology as it destroys." †

III.

We have thus seen that the progress of modern knowledge has not done away with the facts upon which the argument from design has reared itself, though it has sunk its foundations down through the facts of special adaptations into the deeper facts of the general order. We have seen also that the progress of modern knowledge has not emptied the

* "Critiques and Addresses"; p. 272.

* "The Destiny of Man"; p. 113.

logic of the reasoning by which, from such facts, man has reached the conclusion that nature reveals the design of a Creative Intelligence. The old argument still stands, in its essential form, though greatly changed in minor features. The most elaborate recent re-examination of this ancient argument declares that "there is no contradiction between our principles and the most recent scientific conclusions." * This inference is still the only one which the human mind can admit. We are shut up now, as of old, in accounting for creation, to chance or to intelligence ; and chance is simply unthinkable. Physicists themselves, as we have seen, when describing the formative process of life are unconsciously driven into language which implies a Divine Artist. Science finds its way to discoveries, only by asking—What is this organ for? *i.e.*, by assuming a purpose in creation.

True, the argument of design does not prove a Creator, but only an Architect. That, however, is sufficient. There are other and deeper considerations which compel us to identify this Divine Architect with the Eternal First Cause.

At every token of design we may bow, then, as before a thought of God ; and, finding these tokens everywhere, we may well walk humbly, reverently, trustfully and hopefully ; singing—"Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts ; heaven and earth are full

* "Final Causes" ; JANET, p. 145.

of thy glory ; Glory be to Thee, O Lord, Most High." What the glory of the creative thought is we can best see, my brothers, in the memory of the Beloved Son, in whom the Eternal Father was well pleased. That life in the perfect beauty of holiness was the realization of the divine thought of man, and man is the crown and consummation of nature's labor. Over us, too, the Divine Master is toiling, in new-creative work, "until we come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Nature's secret is—

" One God, One Law, One element,
And one far-off Divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

Thus, as discovering a profounder sense than that which lies upon the surface, we may listen again to Spenser's noble words :

" What time this world's great workmaister did cast
To make all things such as we now behold,
It seems that He before his eyes had plast
A goodly patterne, to whose perfect mould
He fashioned them as comely as he could.
* * * * * *

That wondrous patterne, wheresoe'er it be,
Whether in Earth, laid in secret store,
Or else in Heaven, that no man may it see
With sinful eyes, for fear it to deflore,
Is perfect beauty."

IX.

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN IN THE ANIMAL WORLD.

“ The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord;
And Thou givest them their meat in due season.
Thou openest thine hands
And fillest all things living with plenteousness.
The Lord is righteous in all his ways
And holy in all his works.”—Psalm cxlv : 16-17.

THE greatest American preacher of the last generation once wrote a witty satire upon man's conceited criticism of creation, which he titled, “A Bumblebee's Thoughts on the Plan and Purpose of the Universe.”

“ On the 21st day of June, in the year 1,000,617 before our era, there was a great Scientific Convention of Bumblebees (*Apis Bombax*) in a little corner of a valley in the Jura Mountains.” At the close of the convention, the various sections assembled to listen to an address from the President, the most distinguished savant in the world of Bumblebees. Through orderly, logical steps, the eminent savant led his delighted auditors to this conclusion : “ Such, gentlemen, is the Purpose of the World—the Bumblebee. * * * Our thought is the standard measure of the world of things. * * * The Bumbe-

bee consciousness is the true macrocosm, the real great world. * * * The possibilities of mind and matter are exhausted in the Universe, and its plan and purpose in the Bumblebee. But, gentlemen," the orator proceeded, "there is one faculty of our multiform consciousness I have not named as yet, though I think it the greatest of all. I mean the power of criticism. Let me apply this highest faculty of the Bumblebee to the Universe itself, for that is the proper object of our criticism. * * * For a grasshopper or even the largest beetle to criticize the Universe it were ridiculous. But for us, gentlemen, the Universe lies below the level of the Bumblebee's consciousness; we look down thereon and pass judgment." He then alluded to his own peculiar qualifications for such criticism; his great age—"I have buzzed four summers;" his wide travels—"I have been up to the highest fir-tree, yea have flown over it and touched the sky;" all which qualifications warranted him in saying, "If I am Judge of anything, it is of the Universe itself." His judgment he thus declares: "Of the Universe in general, I say, I like it. I admire its plan, I comprehend its wisdom and rejoice in it. * * * However, it is not so large as we have commonly supposed and not so wonderful. But, gentlemen, when I come to speak of its parts, I confess I have my reserves; I cannot approve of all things in it."

This omniscient Bumblebee then proceeded to point out some of the defects of creation. "Too much time was consumed in preparing for our race. The Bumblebee might have existed 2,000,000 years before he did, and all that time was lost. I find fault also with the proportion of the seasons; the summers are too short, the winters are too long and cold. The trees are too tall, such, I mean, as bear the most valuable flowers. Why must the Bumblebee fly for his daily food to such an exceeding height? The conditions of life are too difficult. Why does not honey run all day in any place, or fall each night like dew? Why must we build our houses, and not find them built? Why is so much of our time consumed in these mean evils, which are only for this vile body; and why is there so little left for science and for criticism of the Universe? Yes, gentlemen, I confess it. This is a hard World to live in! It is needlessly hard!" The eloquent orator thus closed—"Such, gentlemen, is the Universe, such its parts, such its purpose and plan. Such also are its defects, and such is the proved pre-eminence of the Bumblebee, who is not only its crown and its completion, but who can enjoy and comprehend it all, nay, can look beyond and see its faults, and find a severe and melancholy pleasure in thinking that it might be better made."*

Have you never listened to such a criticism of

* THEODORE PARKER'S "Works": XII. pp. 150-164.

Creation from a human bumblebee? If you have had this privilege, you must have wondered at the boundless conceit implied in such criticism; at the unconsciousness, at once comic and pathetic, of the absurdity of the situation, when a mortal man sets himself up to pass judgment upon Nature. With what blissful ignorance of the fathomless problems involved in them, the self-satisfied critic of Creation treats, in a breath, of the perplexities of the system amid which we find ourselves! With what childish *nâiveté* he broaches his notions concerning the proper methods upon which our world should be managed! With what nonchalance he tosses off his suggestions for improving the order of the Universe—as much as to say, “See what I could do, an’ I were a god!”

It is easy, my friends, to pick out faults in the Order of Nature. Real and grave disorders exist. There is a mystery of suffering which sorely perplexes the most trusting mind. There is an appalling problem of pain found wherever life is found. You have all felt the oppression of this problem. You have not waited for the issue of John Stuart Mill’s Autobiography to hear the questions raised—How can the Most High allow such dreadful disorders? Can the All Wise be the All Good? A man need not be a charlatan to perceive the facts which he must needs be a charlatan to fault, as with the air of a knowledge superior to the wisdom of The

Infinite, and of an experience greater than that of the Eternal. Because we have the dower of reason we must think about such a problem, but because we are so limited in our range of vision we should think humbly, and as conscious of our wealth of ignorance—even though we have climbed to the top of the tallest tree of knowledge. To throw away our faith in God, because we cannot reconcile the disorders of earth with His wisdom and goodness, is to assume that He has let us into His secrets, and that he has opened to us the working plans after which He is carrying on creation. What adequate conception can such creatures as we are form of the Being whose creative thoughts are blocked out in this studio which we call the Universe? To chatter our pert criticisms in such an atelier, before such a Presence, is but to give "A Bumblebee's Thoughts on the Plan and Purpose of the Universe."

It were a vain task to try to follow a human bumblebee's criticisms of Creation. But it is not a vain task to try to throw a few rays of light upon the difficulties of Nature. There must be some light upon the problem raised by the existence of these disorders, in an Order such as that wherein we find ourselves—else how can we feel sure that there is an Order? Some rays must struggle through the clouds, if there be light in the sky. Let me focus a few of these rays of light upon the dark

problem which, more than any other, troubles the faith of the practical man.

The problem of pain in the animal world, which we shall consider now, is not wholly without light.

I.

There is a quantitative test which we may apply to this problem. Arithmetic may be a very inadequate interpreter of the Almighty, but it can offer some hints as to the thoughts which are so far above our thoughts. The existence of pain in infinitesimal quantities would give us little trouble. There must always be more or less of friction in the working of any mechanism. It is only when the friction becomes excessive that we would dream of faulting a human workman. If the sufferings of the animal world formed its predominant aspect, the problem of pain would be a hopeless one. By as much as the joys of the creatures outweigh their sufferings, the problem of pain is lightened. If the greatest good of the greatest number is being out-worked under the system of creation, we can at least see that Nature may be no unfeeling tyrant, even though her ways are hard. If we apply this quantitative test to the problem of pain, we shall find, I think, that however appalling the actual amount of suffering among the animals, it is vastly over-balanced by the amount of pleasure which they experience.

(1.) There is probably not nearly so much actual suffering in the animal world as a vivid imagination is apt to see. We observe some real suffering, and magnify it by our notions of the numbers of the creatures about us. I see a few crows drop dead on the barren plains around Garden City, in mid-winter, and I pity all crow kind. But any farmer will tell me that I may save my sympathies, that most of the crows live in lusty vigor. You see a wounded dog, and fall a-sorrowing over the woes of the canine race ; but how many dogs out of a hundred are badly wounded? The vast majority of every sort of animal live and die without any distressing casualties. Not one swallow in a thousand suffers hunger.

Moreover, we must not forget that any creature's capacity for suffering is admeasured by its rank in life. The higher the organization is carried, the more complex it becomes, the more varied the range of its powers—so much the more do the possibilities of suffering increase. Every new organ that is added opens a new seat for disease. Every fresh function affords a fresh chance for derangement. Every additional power can work backward and inflict an additional agony on the organization. The whole animal world is without the developments, physical, mental and moral, which store a man with the latencies of such exquisite torture. Leaving the higher realms of mental and moral life

far up beyond our questionings, have you considered what the animals are saved in not being further evolved physically? Cows do not know that they have "nerves." Horses are not troubled with "malaria." The way that an average dog will bolt his dinner shows that he has never consulted a physician about "dyspepsia." The vast majority of living creatures are of so low a type of organization as to keep them down beneath the line of acute suffering. You tread on a worm and see it writhe, and fancy such suffering as you would have, if crushed by the heel of some man of Brobdingnag. It has no power of feeling the smallest fraction of your agony under such a crushing. Why should it groan greatly, when each half can pull itself together and start out afresh for itself?

Then again, most of the violent deaths, which seem to be the ordination of Nature for so large a part of the animal world, are, as far as we can see, comparatively painless. Your hen, that was frozen to death the other night, lost whatever sensitiveness she possessed quite easily; and went into her long sleep unconsciously. The superfluous cat that you dropped into the lake in a bag had but a second or two of struggle, and all was over. The fawn on which the tiger springs is spared the sense of suffering which you fancy. This, at least, we judge from what we know. Dr. Livingstone told us that when, in one of his mid-African travels, a

lion felled him to the earth, he felt no pain from the blow that put his shoulder out of joint, and felt no fear of the terrible death apparently before him. Men who have been on the point of drowning tell us that the sensation is rather delicious than otherwise. The cut of the sabre and the blow of the rifle-ball are scarcely felt by the soldier who dies afterwards from his wounds. Nature paralyzes her victims. Death's touch narcotizes. Life really goes out in sleep. Is there no hint here of a wonderfully gracious Power?

(2.) On the other hand, there is probably far more pleasure in the existence of the creatures of the air, earth and sea than we fancy. We are all apt to measure the pleasure of other creatures by our own notions of joy. We do not see how life can be worth living without nature's modern improvements. What pleasure should I find in the life of a cow or a horse? Not much—unless I were a cow or a horse. But then? Why mere existence in health is a joy! Some glorious day in summer, when you have been out for hours on the Sound, you know what delight it is simply to lie in the warm sun; what joy it is to be caressed by the crisp, cool air which the salt waves have clasped and kissed and then shaken from their arms, charged with life. There is no sense of any animal which does not minister to a pleasure. No creature has a craving for which a gratification is not provided by

Nature. Every action brings its own delight, and rest simply changes the key of happiness and sings a sweeter song of joy.

Watch a field full of lambs frisking in pure sportiveness, a couple of pups chasing each other over the lawn, a kitten playing with a spool of thread on the floor, and you will see what the younglings of nature find of pleasure, in simply existing. Age sobers animals, as it sobers men, but it gives them quieter pleasures for the romps they have lost. Feel how your horse's nerves are tingling with the excitement of a scamper over the turf. He has enjoyed it as much as you have done. Note the serene satisfaction of a cow, chewing its cud. What a picture of dignified contentment. No millionaire, retired from business, with a safe-deposit full of coupons, can equal Brindle's peace and comfort. Listen to the birds singing on an early summer's morning. They give a choral rendering of the Song of Joy such as not even Beethoven could have set, nor our noble and lamented Damsch have led. Lie down close among the grasses, some warm summer afternoon; still yourself into accord with the hush of Nature; and then what an indescribable hum you will hear, as of the whispered song of happy life, lulling itself into a siesta of bright and pleasant dreams. Far down the scale of being as you may go, you find the signs of gladness; in the insects playing their unending game

of tag above the pond, and in the rotifers whirling and tumbling about beneath the lenses of your microscopes.

Turn where you will in Nature, it seems to me that you must see and hear and feel the tokens of the pleasure which Life bestows upon her children. For one, I cannot but so read the moods of Nature as to find that pleasure vastly predominates over pain, in the lower lives around us. There are sobs and groans, but they are swallowed up in cooing whispers of content and in swelling songs of gladness. There are harsh sharps in the anthem of Nature, but they are chorded into harmonies of joy. Though the lambs may bleat and the ewes may moan, of Jehovah it may still be said—"He shall gather the lambs in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young."

II.

There is a qualitative test which we may apply to this problem of pain in the animal creation. The character of the suffering which Nature inflicts suggests her meaning in it. This plainly must be the real key to the problem. When your baby, who is just learning to walk, manifests a disposition to play with the fire in your grate, you lead her firmly up to the fire-place and hold out her chubby hand toward the flames until she sobs vigorously ;

and then you let her go, and meet her pretty wrath, as she stamps her foot and cries—"Naughty Papa, to hurt Baby so." You smile, and, when her pout is over, hug her to your heart while you tell her that you wanted to teach her that fire burns, and that she must not play with the flames. Next day the little darling is sick at stomach, from eating too many sugar plums, and you make her take the nauseous purgative against which she kicks lustily, but for which, if she were wise enough, she would thank you heartily. My boy comes running to me, holding up his hand which a mad dog has just bitten, and I quickly seize the poker, heat it in the grate and "burn him frightfully," as he says, or "cauterize the wound," as I tell him. He thinks me cruel. I know I am kind. The pain would be the same to baby girl or to romping boy whatever the reason of the father's acts; but what a difference in the problem of the father's character to him who sees only the hard hand which seems to torture the child, knowing nothing of the meaning of the action, and to him who sees the motive in the deed, and reads the meaning of the loving heart!

The quality of the pain in the animal world interprets it. Is it meaningless, purposeless, useless? Then, indeed, it is impossible to see in it the action of a merciful and gracious Power. Does it, on the other hand, betray glimpses of a meaning in its pangs; does that meaning look, even to our dim

eyes, like a kindly purpose of the Creative Mind ; does that purpose show itself to be the preservation of the suffering creature itself from greater ills, and the development of life into nobler forms ? Then, though the ways of the Most High may still be far above our ways, we need not doubt that they are the paths of the All-Good.

No one, it seems to me, can study carefully the problem of pain, as it presents itself to us in the lower lives around us, without catching glimpses of such purpose in the pangs which they endure.

(1.) Much of the pain of the animal world is plainly a merciful provision of Nature for the preservation of the very creature that is suffering it. My collie comes limping up to me, whining. He has run a thorn in his paw. He suffers acutely before I can get it out. Were I to orate, like the illustrious Bumblebee, I would strike an attitude and exclaim—"Why has this noble creature not had given to him a cuticle on his paw which would be less sensitive to the thorns that Nature has strewn loosely around?" To which you might reply—"Simply, O thou Human Bumblebee, because, if he had a less sensitive cuticle, the thorn would have run in further and have been harder to pull out. Then you might have had to cut his paw to get it out, or have been obliged to leave it in his foot to fester, to lame him and perhaps kill him. His pain thus saves him from more pain." I have a thor-

oughly interesting setter, at home, who is a constant study to me. He is a frank, affectionate, honest sort of a fellow—as selfish as a pig or as an average man. I observe in him a peculiar sensitiveness to suffering of any kind, and, as he is not more thoughtful than hosts of his human brothers and quite as greedy, he would be forever getting into trouble and making himself sick, but for the nice and delicate discrimination which he has cultivated, by the discipline of manifold disappointments, of illusions which he has learned to see through, and of canine miseries which he has endured, not over heroically, and which have made him a wiser if a sadder dog. Thus we see that much of the physical pain which the animals experience is clearly Mother Nature's method of warning her lowly children against greater pain ahead. It is the display of the danger-signal.

So is it with the worst mental sufferings which they experience. When you see a timid hare starting at every sound, running as for its life at the noise of your footsteps, you are tempted to say—Why does this poor, feeble creature have its life made a constant torment to it? Why should it be forever haunted with the shadow of Fear? Simply, my friend, that the shadow of Death may not fall upon it. It has no power of self-protection, save in its speed. Its arms are its legs. Its escape from dogs and from men depends upon its getting a

prompt start. So it carries an alarm-clock, ever set in its little head, connected with the nerve cords that run from its large and sensitive ears, which are forever turning in every direction to catch the slightest sounds. That alarm-clock we call Fear. The hare's life is preserved by that which torments it. Mental as well as physical pain is thus a storm-signal, hung out by Nature's Weather Bureau; a kindly warning against life's running out blindly into the face of a gale. Better the wetting in the harbor than a wreck on the sea.

(2.) Much of the pain to which the animals are subjected is plainly a provision of Nature for the preservation of the family to which the suffering creatures belong. The principle of solidarity acts as well among animals as among men. Cows form part of a bovine race, and may need to suffer somewhat, not merely for their individual self-preservation but for the perpetuation of the common stock. How pathetic is the mourning of a cow for her calf which has been taken from her! This Rachel of the fields, weeping for her child, will not be comforted. Why should Nature endow this poor mother with the instinct which thus wounds her so sorely? Plainly, to preserve the bovine race from quickly dying out. Were there no such maternal solicitude, how many calves would outlive their first feebleness, but for man's stepping in as a proxy Providence? How many broods of chickens would be

raised, but for this same maternal instinct, which takes all the satisfaction out of the hen that used to have such an easy time, and which worries her nearly to death in looking after her heedless young ones? To deliver them from the claws of the hawk, to save them from the fatal pond, to keep them well supplied with food and to shelter them under her warm wings through cold nights—such is the function of this motherly anxiety. As soon as Nature's purpose is accomplished there is an end to the distress of cow and hen. The calf that is able to take care of itself is left to itself, with complete indifference, by the cow that was but lately so affectionate. The chicks that can scratch for themselves become as anybody's chicks to the hen which but a few days before was all concern for them. Thus nature eases the strain upon her creatures, as soon as the conservative function of the pain which she imposed is discharged. She taxes individuals for the good of the whole; but she lays only such an impost of pain upon them as will suffice to support the race.

(3.) Much of the pain which Nature inflicts upon her creatures has a still larger social function to discharge. Not only must an individual suffer, if need be, for a family, but one race must suffer, if need be, for a higher race. The aspect of the animal world which most troubles us, has, I think, its interpretation in this principle. As we look down upon the animal world, it seems to be in a chronic

state of war. Strife, savage and selfish, prevails everywhere. The strong devour the weak—among beasts and fishes, among insects and infusoria. Might is right, in this struggle of life. Nature herself arms the stronger creatures for this tyranny of brute force. She leaves the flying-fish defenceless before the dolphin and the dolphin as defenceless before the porpoise. She puts into the lion the stormfulness which thunders in his voice, affrighting the timid deer; and she nerves the tiger with the swift spring which, like the lightning, strikes before it is heard and strikes to kill. What does it all mean, we say to ourselves? How can there be any such goodness toward his creatures on the part of the Creative Power as that which the Ancient Hebrew poet dreamed, when he chanted his beautiful song of praise to the Father of beasts and men?

Any one can see the broad fact, which stands out "in sunny outlines brave and clear," that Nature is busied with pushing on an organic ascent of life; that she is intent on developing life into ever nobler forms; that she is working her way up to man, as in man she is still working her way on towards the ideal humanity. That general plan is certainly one to draw forth our reverent admiration. It involves the displacement of lower forms of life to make room for higher forms of life, in successive order. All forms of life could not co-exist in the world at one and the same time. With the utmost bounti-

fulness of hospitality, Mother Nature could not set plates for all the families of life, from the protozoa up to man, at one hour. Her solution of the problem is a succession of tables. The steward who dismisses each table is named Death. How shall Death clear the tables? If he waits for each set to get through, in its own time, the earth-children would linger too long over the board. So the successive sets are told to clear their own places at the table. A rough, hard system, you say. So it seems; but what vastly greater hardships, as every one can see, would be involved in any other system. Were there no violent deaths, the wild animals would linger on into an old age of utter helplessness and distressing misery. Where could be provided the hospitals for infirm birds, no longer able to fly, or for aged couples of squirrels, whose teeth could no longer crack nuts? Man can mitigate the miseries of a helpless old age for those he loves, but we can well enough understand the horrors of a lingering life which prompt many savage races to the custom of killing outright the old folk, whose joy in existence is all gone. Nature prompts her children to the same merciful cutting short of existence, before the wretchedness of a helpless old age. One rarely sees an aged wild creature. Mother Nature has her own ways of despatching her children before they starve to death. It is the weak and injured creatures who fall a prey to the tyrants of the woods and the

waters and the air. Instead of a lingering end of inevitable suffering, they are killed outright, in the easy way in which, as I have already hinted, a violent death generally acts.

Even the wholesale murder of lower lives which many of the higher creatures habitually commit, is not without an air of positive benevolence. If you know how the lower forms of life spawn, you can not only readily imagine how little room they would leave for any higher organizations upon the earth, if their growth was not checked by mighty destructive forces, but you can even perceive quite clearly that, save for such seemingly cruel agencies of destruction, there would be little room left for these lower lives themselves. They would speedily overpopulate the earth and starve themselves out. By as much as a quick unconscious end is more merciful than a slow starvation, by so much is Nature's plan of administering death in wholesale more merciful than a softer system, even to the lower creatures themselves. Thus the "police of Nature," however brutally they may seem to act, act under the guidance of a Power which is thinking graciously and is governing mercifully. That Power crowds each tiniest life with pleasure, however brief, and then spares it the sufferings of the disease which comes from too long lingering over the table of the earth, and the pitiful miseries of the slow starvation

which would await those who could no longer help themselves from the table.

In such ways as these, we see how Nature's ordination of pain is not without a purpose of good, for the individual, for the kind, or for life at large. Its quality is plainly usefulness. Its function is conservation. It can therefore be the ordination of a Good-God. Thus with substantial reasons we may trust—

“ That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a useless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.”

And this trust, which man has always held that—

“ God was love indeed,
And love Creation's final law : ”

Man has rightly held—

“ Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravin, shrieked against his Creed.”

Despite of the Poet Laureate's ears, we may hear, beneath the shriek, a deep, still whisper of that very Creed.

III.

Tried alike by the quantitative and by the qualitative tests, the problem of pain discloses, at least

hints of a possible solution by those who, in the times to come, may study it with larger knowledge and with deeper thought.

True, we cannot make out a benevolent purpose in all the pain which Nature inflicts upon her children. But we can make out this meaning in enough cases to warrant us in waiting patiently for further light on the facts which are still in the dark. If there be no such kindly feeling in Mother Nature's hard hand, why does she take so much trouble to provide her children with the necessities of life and to save them from its evils? How wonderful is the quick, sure instinct with which all creatures are endowed, as a means of guarding them against possible dangers! The hen that has hatched a brood of chicks and ducklings together does not need to instruct her chicks against the fatal pond, for which the ducklings make a bee-line. They know enough not to try to swim, even though their mother does not cluck after them. With what fine discrimination the not over-intelligent cow picks her food in the fields! You do not have to hang out a label, marked "poison," on the plants which would be fatal to her. She knows them without your books. How careful Mother Nature is to put her poisons in blue bottles, lest her children should take the wrong vials! She makes poisons for the most part taste bitter, and poisonous plants generally look ugly.

Then, again, what solicitous care Mother Nature

displays to provide remedies for the ills which her children suffer, and to have them in a handy corner! The beasts do not have to go many blocks to find their apothecary's shop. They need consult no directory, to learn where it is located. With what unerring instinct your dog will go off nosing in the fields for the herbs which can cure his ailment! He is his own doctor, and carries his diploma in his nose. How well your horse knows what he needs, when he insists on eating the earth which you fancy is going to hurt him. Let him alone! He knows vastly more about his needs than any veterinary surgeon whom you can consult. Seeing all this motherly care of Nature, may we not feel sure that the pain whose purpose we cannot make out may have a purpose, none the less, which higher intelligences can readily enough read?

Much more might well be said concerning this dark problem. A considerable part of the distress of the animal world is due, plainly, to the disorders which man has introduced into Nature; and, in so far, the responsibility for pain is rolled off from Providence upon mankind.

This in particular we must bear in mind, that no thought of this problem of pain can be just which views the Creation as a perfected work of the Most High. We cannot affirm, as a great Hebrew affirmed centuries ago—"He has made nothing im-

perfect ;" * unless we mean that the original thought of Creation in the Divine Mind was perfect, and that the ultimate realization of that creative thought will be a perfect Order. That we may well believe, nay, must believe, if we believe in God. But it has pleased the Divine Being to work out his creative thought slowly and gradually. Standing in the midst of this process, we stand amid an imperfectly realized thought. The marks of imperfection are on every hand. That imperfect Order means—a disorder. And this is the fact that is before us. An Order whose beautiful and wonderful system of laws awes our souls ; whose disorders puzzle our reasons ; whose evils burden our consciences. Life, as we now see it, is but the blocking in of the Divine Artist's conception, and we must needs wait the completion of His work before attempting the rôle of critics of the Almighty. This is most palpably true of the animal world. Aristotle, long ago, said that "the animal is an unfinished man." It is a study for the Divine Artist's greater work of Man. Let us think of it accordingly, and leave, to those who shall see 'the man-child glorious' of the future, the task of judging the creative thought of God.

When all is said, we must still bow in the awe of silence, and trust that which, though no man can disprove, no man can fully prove.

* Ecclesiasticus ; xii : 24.

"Cease then, nor Order Imperfection name :

* * * * * *

All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee ;

All chance, direction, which thou canst not see,

All discord, harmony not understood,

All partial evil, universal good."

X.

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN PAIN.

"Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward."—Job, v: 7.

"The Lord is good."—Psalm xxiv: 8.

TO the great unknown who wrote the most wonderful book in the Old Testament, it seemed that man was born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward. Thus it seems to us still, after all the centuries that have intervened. Trouble comes to nearly every man in some form or other. Sickness, suffering, care, toil, poverty, affliction—these seem the gifts of the malicious fairies that wait on the cradles of the children of men. Illusions cheat the boy. Disappointments mock the youth. Wearying work exhausts the man. The body carries in it the seeds of excruciating disease. Each organ proves an endowment yielding an income of torture. No places seem to be set at the table of earth for the hosts whose one thought in life becomes—bread. Success is bought at the price of ease and comfort. The prizes of life turn, when won, into Dead Sea Apples. The heart's affections store us with capacities of agony. Those who make life worth the living are snatched away from us. The shadow of

death lies over every home. We fall ourselves in the midst of life's ambitions. As inevitably as the sparks fly upward, the happy child moves forward into trouble. Nature's benediction on her children sounds like an imprecation. Providence prepares pain. How then can we say, "The Lord is good?"

What a bewildering and oppressive problem confronts us in this lot of man! Every question which is raised by the sufferings of the animal world is raised more insistently and with a deepened intensity by the sufferings of mankind. If the faith in a good God is sorely tried by the cry of the lowly creatures around us, what dreadful doubts are awakened at the agonized "cry of the human," out into the darkness whence issue the hands that smite so sorely! No man can solve this problem of pain, over which the greatest minds of earth have ever labored; but any man can gain so much of light upon it as to warrant him in the trust that it is solvable, by higher intelligences in coming times—else how could we seriously believe in a good God? May the Spirit in whom I have learned through suffering to believe, help me to help you out of somewhat of the awful shadow which your troubles cast upon your soul, into the warmth and light of a Father's face!

Let me lead you along the same lines as those which we followed in the last sermon.

I.

Tried by the quantitative test, this problem of human pain yields some results which are at least reassuring.

(1.) The broad fact which first faces us, as we climb from the animal world into the world of man, is that the extent of pain increases. Man experiences a wider variety and a deeper intensity of suffering.

What a contrast our life presents to the life around us ! When the sun arises the birds waken to their blithesome carols, as they fly lightly from their nests in the trees to find their breakfast waiting for them at the hands of Him who giveth to the young raven his food ; while from wretched homes the wan factory-children and the weary-faced shop-girls drag themselves forth to the long day's toil, by which they make ready a breakfast for the morrow. Your boy has to run the gauntlet of a host of diseases which never trouble the growing dog at his side. We have nobler bodies than the brutes, and we have to build hospitals for the treatment of maladies of which our lowly relatives never dreamed. The ants and the bees form busy industrial communities, but there is no strife of capital and labor in their towns. There are no police-courts and prisons in the fields and the

woods. Nature has no Baxter-street. In "God's first temples," the priests are never alarmed about the spread of Rationalism.

From this Eden how far has man wandered, in what we call his progress! Each advance proves an opening of new domains for the tyranny of Pain.

This looks dark indeed—very little like the gracious plan of a Merciful Father. But is there no light on the darkness? The increased capacity of pain, which is found in ascending from the animal world to man, is the inevitable draw-back to the increased capacity of pleasure. In gaining a higher physical organization new sources of enjoyment open to man, while he obeys the laws of Nature and keeps well; and, unavoidably, as far as we can see, new sources of suffering are opened, if he disobeys Nature's laws and gets out of order. The nerves that are made so fine as to thrill with the delight which we can feel must be capable of equal agonies. When you pass from your practising fiddle to a rare old Cremona, you can draw forth rapturous strains which your first strings never could have yielded, but you can extract also a screech such as they never could have given. Every new range of powers is like an added bank of keys in yonder organ—the opening of fresh octaves either for a Jubilate or a Miserere. In gaining a higher organization, you gain both heightened joys and heightened agonies. That placid cow, chewing her

cud in idyllic contentment, never knows your torture, my musical friend, when the owner of a broken-down hand-organ insists on giving you a free concert below your window, but then German Opera would be to her only—noise. My dogs know nothing of my mental weariness, but they know nothing of my joy over Shakespeare or before a Turner. The more highly developed industrial society of man carries in it the possibilities of the dreadful disorders which so distress us to-day—disorders which the bees and the ants escape; but it carries in it also the capacities for a nobler order of wealth, prosperity and peace, of the sciences and the arts and all the fair humanities, such as the stationary communities of those happy toilers will never find. The animals are not crossed in their instincts by uncomfortable ideals and by restrictive laws; but they are not led up into any higher life of the Spirit. They escape the stress and strain of our human conflict with evil; but only by missing the possibilities of the victorious goodness which you and I may win—by coming short of a true character. They do untroubled the things which we do only to be stung by shame and maddened by remorse; but they know not the peace of forgiveness, the strength of mastered impulses, the joy of loyalty to Duty. Sin's shadow rests not on them, but the crown of saintship is not held over them. No Hell yawns below them, but no Heaven opens above, full of glory.

This is the secret of man's loss of the happy, thoughtless, untroubled life of his lowly brothers of the field and wood; as Matthew Arnold reads it in the answer of Nature to the questionings of the human soul:

“ ‘ Ah child ! ’ she cries, ‘ that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine ?

“ ‘ There is no effort on *my* brow—
I do not strive, I do not weep ;
I rush with the swift spheres and glow
In joy, and, when I will, I sleep !
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once—but where ?
* * * * *

“ ‘ ‘Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
And lay upon the breast of God.’ ”

(2.) When we come to examine the proportion of pain and pleasure in the life of man, certain facts meet us, on which we need not dwell at any length; as what was said upon this aspect of the problem of pain in the animal world is equally applicable to the problem of human trouble. Appalling as the actual amount of pain is, we are very apt, by our personal sufferings and our sympathy with the sufferings of others, to magnify it still further; while we depreciate the actual amount of pleasure in man's lot. The traveller recalls the inn where he had such a vile dinner and such an exasperating bed, but he forgets

the dozens of inns where he fared fairly well. Our organs work without making their action felt, until they get into disorder; and then we ignore the years of physical comfort, under the impression of a day of agony. We have a vivid memory of the sickness which laid us up in acute suffering for several weeks, but the years of good health which we have enjoyed make a vague impression upon us. There is not a day that we live in tolerable health that is not stored with pleasures of one kind and another, but we take no note of the privileges we have possessed in eye and ear. We cry out bitterly against Providence when we suffer, but we forget to thank God for the daily blessings which, if we had them not and could have the promise of them, would fill our souls with joy and praise. "There are more houses than hospitals in the world."

Further, be it remembered that the finer organizations can very readily appraise too highly the misfortunes of less sensitive natures. The poor have a hard enough time, but they do not suffer as much as might be supposed, from some of the features of their lot which appeal to the sympathies of cultivated folk very strongly. You would be wretched without your morning bath, but you can save the sympathy which flows out to hosts of your fellow-citizens who have not your facilities for bathing. They are entirely happy without so much as a tub-day in their weekly Calendar. You, my house-

keeping friend, go into some of the wretched quarters near you, and return home heavy-hearted because of the dirt of those dark rooms. Bless your kind heart, those people enjoy their dirt thoroughly. Clean up their rooms for them, and they would not feel at home until they had re-established a comfortable mess around them. I look in town from my prairie home and sigh, "Oh if I could only bring hosts of families from the tenements to these open stretches of sunlight!" I have taken and sent some of them out into the country, but they were all restless until they had found their way back into their tenements. This Church sent such a family once out West, where a good opening had been made for them—and we ran across them, soon after, in the old haunts; for, as the mother remarked: "People are a lot more companionable than stumps." One of the hardest tasks which our Board of Health has found, has been in forcing our New York troglodytes out of the cellar-caves, whose rent is paid to Disease and Death.

Taking the average human life, he would be a bold man who, rightly weighing the manifold daily blessings which come like the sunshine and the dew, "missed in the common-place of miracle," would venture to pronounce the lot of man rather one of pain than of pleasure.

This may seem a rough way of admeasuring the problem of pain. I seem to hear a sigh, as from

heavy hearts here saying—"One hour of agony, such as I suffer at times, outweighs whole weeks of health; these months of affliction are crowded with an intensity of grief that makes such calculations seem unfeeling and cruel." Would you really rather die, then, my suffering friend? And if you do cling to life, despite your pain, does that not show that the Providence against which you are tempted to inveigh has really left you enough of pleasure to make existence desirable, even under your suffering? Are you ready, my afflicted friend, to deny that great word of the immortal Song of Sorrow?—

" 'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all."

Even without the blessed hope of life beyond the grave, it seems to me that, despite our pains and our sorrows, if our lot be no worse than the average, and we can be calm enough to be just, we must say—"We thank Thee for our Creation."

Moreover, in any appraisal of the quantity of pain which is appointed to our lot on earth, we must not forget to discount, from the sum of suffering which we place to the credit of Providence, the amount which is to be charged to our human responsibility. Is your physical suffering wholly an infliction of some higher power? Were there no

early excesses which sowed the seeds of your present pains? Are you altogether free from blame for the unhappiness of your domestic life, or for the distress your daughter is causing you? Was your friend a helpless victim to the habit of drink which broke up his home, or to the habit of speculation which ruined his prospects? Can the filthy cities of Southern France call the cholera of last summer a visitation of Providence; or will we, in this city, have any right to orate against the injustice of Fate, if that plague visits our dirty tenements next summer? Is Nature wholly at fault for the poverty which shadows so deeply the lot of hosts of our fellow-men? Has she set no plates for the children of men who are starving? Have not their own vices emptied the plates which were set before some of them, and has not the greed of their stronger brothers crowded others away from that table? Is there no work in our homes awaiting the girls who prefer to slave in shops? Are there no improvements clearly possible upon our present industrial and commercial system, which would do away with the worst of the evils of society? Ah! my friends, there is an enormous discount to be made from the sum of human suffering which we charge against the Almighty. Let man right the disorders which he can see to be his own fault, and how much more of a beautiful order would arise from the chaos of earth. What a boon life may yet be made, when

knowledge reveals the laws of life and when wisdom applies them to the lot of man.

II.

The qualitative test is that which brings out most light upon the problem of human pain. There are unmistakable hints of a Fatherly purpose in the pain which man suffers.

(1) Much of our human suffering clearly has a preservative function, for the individual or for the race. That which was said upon this aspect of the sufferings of the animals, applies equally to the sufferings of man. By burning our fingers we learn that fire burns, and save ourselves from roasting. Repeated attacks of indigestion, from overeating, teach us the necessity of moderation, and preserve us from the diseases which follow gluttony. We learn the laws of health through the pains which their violation inflicts. In no other way, apparently, would man have learned this lesson. You preach in vain, to your boys, the need of constant care concerning health. They smile at your old-fashioned notions, and go on to teach themselves through colds and fevers, through dyspepsia and rheumatism. Experience is the real educator of man, and its exercises are pains. Would you have the Heavenly Father interrupt the lessons of his under-master, Experience, and lose man golden truths by saving him from a little suffering?

Every security that society holds to-day against any physical danger has been thrown up around it by the volcanic fires of human agony. When Henry Hudson felt his way up our noble river, he knew not what danger lay before him at every turn, what sunken rocks lay in the course of the "Half Moon," what treacherous shoals might make their presence known only by the scraping of her keel upon their sands. We do not half enough admire the superb pluck of those brave sailors who, without a chart, threaded their way through our unknown waters. To-night great steamers will carry hundreds of human beings upon the same river, in such a sense of security that no one will think of lying awake. Next summer you will sail your yacht through the Sound in absolute confidence that you can know every rock and every shoal; your chart giving your course, in and out of harbors which you have never entered, as clearly as the sign-boards in the country direct the traveller on his way. How has this security been gained? Largely through dreadful accidents. Off Beaver Tail, you may sight to-day a buoy floating above the sunken rock on which, but a half decade ago, a Providence Steamer stranded; no one apparently having known before of this rock's existence. A wreck locates a sunken rock beyond a peradventure. The true Coast Surveyors are the traders who bump into the reefs along our shores, one after another.

Have you ever wakened in the night to hear the funereal booming of a buoy-bell in the fog, warning your yacht off from death? There is in that booming bell the cry of a drowning man, whose loss upon the reef before you saves your crew from perishing. All along our Atlantic Coast, from Mt. Desert to Cape Sable, there stretches a cordon of life-saving stations, whose crews patrol our shores in a continuous line of two thousand miles. Through the storm and sleet of our winter nights, while you are sleeping soundly, these hardy fellows are pacing the rocks of New England and the sandy beaches of Florida, ready to spring to the aid of any vessels in distress. The storm-tossed sailor nears our coast, through dark and tempestuous nights, knowing that he is never out of sight of these saviors of ships. You can go to Washington and find the cost of this service, as the Government books record it; but the true cost you will not find therein. The purchase-price of this salvation has been paid by the vessels that have gone ashore on our coasts; by the wrecks whose horrors have stirred us up to these precautions. The men and women who have drowned, without help, a few feet out from Long Island and New Jersey, bought with their lives the safety of every great steamer that approaches our coasts amid the gales of mid-winter.

There is not a single safeguard of our social order but that has been built at some such cost. We

have good laws guarding property and persons. The legislators who framed them were named Pil-lage, Robbery, Riot, Murder, Anarchy. The age of lawlessness, when every man's hand was against his brother, when no possessions were secure by day, and no man's life was safe by night, formed the lessons from which Civilization has learned the sacredness of property and person. The pangs of the peasant, who saw his fields trampled down and his home in ashes, in the wake of the forays of the Baron from the castled crag; the mental distress of the good burgher, who never knew from day to day what would become of the fruits of his life's hard toil—these were the coin paid down for our present social order, wherein we no longer carry swords at our sides, and no longer bury our treasures in the ground. Do we know how to keep the Plague of the Middle Ages away from our cities? We have learned this secret through the agonies of the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the tortures of the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day. The horrors of the Medieval towns, when Death rode forth against them upon his pale horse, bought our salvation. Not a child that died in agony, not a mother who broke her heart over her dead baby, not an orphaned household, suffering a slow starvation, but has saved hosts of other homes and hearts and lives. How dreadful were the scenes of the French Revolution! Yet the more

dreadful scenes of jails filled with the slowly-dying victims of kingly tyranny, and of fields where starving people gleaned for roots, were thus made forever impossible in France. The Constitutional Liberty of the Nation dates from that anarchic revolt ; and the prosperity of the peasantry flows directly from the re-organization of the system of land-tenure then effected. The Guillotine cut off hosts of abuses with the heads of Marie Antoinette and of Vergniaud. The Terror purchased freedom and prosperity for France. Pitiful is the sight of a half million of people, in such a land as this, standing idle in the market-place of labor, asking for work. Sad is it to look in upon the homes where a bitter Lent is being kept ; children on half rations ; fathers doing without meals, to keep enough for the little ones ; mothers crying when babies ask for bread. A shameful sight this, in a country where wealth abounds and luxury suffers no stint—a sin for which we may well, as a nation, do some honest repenting at this holy season. But think you that there is no Eye that notes pitifully the tears of the poor, and no Ear that listens to their cries, because no Hand reaches forth out of the darkness, dropping loaves into our tenements ? What voices less arousing than those which such suffering keys to angered threats of violence would waken a heedless, selfish society to the fact that something is wrong ? These hungered laborers suffer not for naught. Labor is

learning its own follies, and capital is being taught the duty of a better organization of industry. Every pang now will save hosts of such pangs in the future.

(2) We have been led up, unconsciously, to the point whence we see, in this preservative function of pain, a higher function—that of education. It is the means not alone of saving individuals and society from more and worse sufferings, and of keeping men and nations alive ; it is the means of leading life onward to higher stages of development. It is the condition of improvement. The secret of pain is—progress.

What progress there has been from the cave-dwellers to the people of our homes ! Physically, mentally, and morally, the man of New York is like another being than the man who once roamed the earth ; as hairy as the beasts whose caves he made his home, as wild as those beasts whose raw flesh he made his food. Every step in this astonishing advance has been won under the spur of suffering. What led him to clothe himself, and thus make the first step towards civilization ? The savage cold of winter. Why did he build himself a house ? To keep off the chilling rains. How was he led to cultivate the ground ? The fear of hunger turned the nomad into the farmer. What caused him to associate himself with his fellows and to form a village ? The necessity of assistance against the wild beasts

around him. Whence came the promptings which elaborated the laws that bound society together in peace and happiness? Out of the miseries and woes of a lawless savagery. What cement has compacted his society in ever-growing solidarity of human interests? The tears and blood of a barbarism in which every man's hand was against his brother. Why did he set at work to drain swamps and clear forests? He was crowded down off the good ground, and the vapors of the swamp poisoned him and the wild beasts ambushed behind the trees in the forest. How came he to wander forth from home and colonize the world? He wanted bread and could find no chance to win it. Wherefore has he left behind him the customs and usages which are so dreadful even to look back upon—slavery, chronic war and all the savageries of his early days? He found that they cost him so heavily that he had to abandon them. What reasonings have led him to his successive reforms in the industrial order? The rough blows of Armed Revolt; the dark deeds of the Jacquerie, of the Peasants' War, and of Jack Cade's Rebellion; the light of castles in flames, and the logic of revolution. What eloquence has persuaded him into his astonishing political progress? The groans which were overheard through the walls of a Bastille; the muttered curses that followed the track of the King's tax-gatherer; the bitter cry of the oppressed—"to arms!" Who dowered him

with his present liberty of conscience? The martyrs at the stake which a persecuting Church has reared; the men who burned at Smithfield; the women who perished in the Dragonnades; the victims of the Inquisition; the human sacrifices of the Auto-da-fe.

These be thy guides onward and upward, O man! The sufferings of the past have shamed thee into the victories of the present! Thou hast been whipped, O illustrious Humanity, like a school-boy, into learning the lessons which have made thee what thou art! Thy pangs and pains are the price that thou hast paid for progress!

Thus the miseries of man in the past take on an air which, though awful indeed, is not without a severe graciousness, as of the discipline of a Power purposing his progress.

The misery of man to-day has the same educative function. Mankind is far from having perfected its social order. All about us are the works of an imperfect civilization. We are only beginning to learn the laws of a true social science. We are now, for the first time in history, seriously grappling with the disorders of earth. How vast and herculean the labor which is before man! What force shall goad him to the task? The old force of suffering. Pain must open his eyes to the disorders in his social constitution, and pain, grown unbearable, must drive him to correct those disorders. This is the clue to

the sufferings which we see everywhere to-day. The horrors of Russian prisons are educating a constitutional government instead of a tyrannous autocracy ; the lawless agrarianism of Ireland is enforcing a study of the wrongs of the Celts, upon their Saxon masters ; the strife of Capital and Labor is preparing a higher industrial order ; the chronic revolutions of Mexico and of the South American States are giving those peoples their first lessons in self-government ; the miseries of marriage are teaching society to seek, in more careful unions, the prevention of those evils for which our free and easy divorce is the quack cure ; the distresses of doubt are training a nobler and securer faith. Everywhere that one turns in society, he finds, gleaming through the shadows of suffering, the light of a gracious Purpose of Progress. The Ideal disturbs man's lazy dreams and leaves him not to the contentedness of nature, while to enforce its exigent solicitations necessity prods him onward with its sharp goad.

What would man have achieved in the past had he not been driven to work, like the fellaheen of Egypt, to the music of the lash ? What would he now achieve if the fear of suffering were withdrawn ? How much wealth would be produced this year did Hunger not waken early each morning and force men to their tasks ? How long would it take for all our accumulated wealth to be used up, for Europe

and America to lapse back to the verge of starvation on which India lives—were the wolf not ever growling at the door of the mass of men? What advance of mental life, so toilfully won, would be held, but for the absolute necessity of work imposed on every professional man, on every student, on every artist? “If I miss my scales one day,” said a distinguished singer, “I notice it myself. If I miss them for two days, my friends notice it. If I miss them for three days, the public notices it.” So she practises daily. How long would the average man keep erect on the steep heights of honor and rectitude, of temperance and purity, were it not for the awful chasms of shame which yawn below him; whose terrors of social reprobation nerve him for his arduous pathway over the glacier-fields, and keep his feet from slipping, where a single misstep may mean a plunge into the crevasse?

Shall man whimper and whine over the hard lot which trains the thews and sinews of a vigorous manhood, and pushes him onward towards the stars? Shall he cry out that his Heavenly Father is unkind and cruel, because that Father will not humor his laziness and pamper his ignorance, and spoil the child by sparing the rod, but insists upon thrusting an iron spade into his hand instead of dropping a silver spoon into his mouth? Omniscient critics of creation repeat the wisdom of the illustrious Bumblebee—“Why does not honey run

all day in any place or fall each night like dew?" Simply, O ye Human Bumblebees, that man may not be a South-Sea Islander; lying all day by the springs whence the honey flows into his mouth, and dreaming all night of succeeding days of loafing for honey.

By every sign and token which we can discern, Nature is leading mankind onwards towards perfection. Science unites with Philosophy in revealing this goal of our costly progress. Mr. Darwin declares, as he closes his "*Origin of Species*:" "As natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection." It follows that evil must gradually disappear from human life, as imperfections grow out towards perfection, as disorders are developed into a beautiful order. Mr. Herbert Spencer looks forward to the steady diminution of human ills, and to their complete disappearance in the far future. The vision of Science is of a coming Man, redeemed by pain from pain, educated through suffering out of suffering; and thus, not alone Faith, but, Knowledge may be invoked "to justify the ways of God to Man."

(3) I have thus far spoken chiefly of the educative function of pain in the life of man rather than in the lives of men, of its purpose for the race rather than for individuals. It is easier to discern the lines of law in the sweep of a nation's history

than in the little story of a life; and, when we see the spring of a large and gracious law in the dark course marked out for the race, we can trust that the projection of our personal experiences will fall into the orbit of such a purpose of progress. One cannot study his own troubles calmly, but he may get a reflected light upon them from the study of the troubles of mankind at large, wherein his personal sorrows shall take on a look in which, through their mystery of pain, a secret of peace shall gleam.

The meaning of the ordination of pain for man must be its meaning for men. Our personal troubles have an educative function to discharge. We are schooled into wisdom through suffering. After what has already been said, it is needless to illustrate this at any length, in the case of the lesser troubles of life. One and all, they come to teach us the laws of life, and to train us in obedience to those laws. But that which we can so readily perceive, concerning the little troubles of our childhoods, is equally true of the more serious troubles of manhood and womanhood.

I have at home a most cogent argument upon this point. It is a group of photographs of a Negro, in the different stages of his development. The first picture gives the face of a certain boy when he was admitted to the Hampton School. It shows scarcely any intelligence, and is a painful confirmation of the relationship of the genus homo

to the man-ape. The second picture presents a face that would never be recognized as that of the same boy. It was taken midway in his course of education. Mind has broken forth upon the baboon face, and the touches of thought and feeling are already carving the countenance into lines of strength and grace. The third picture completes the transfiguration, and an intelligent and noble soul lights up the mask of clay with a human beauty. Such a transformation was wrought by the hard discipline and the arduous toil of the school. Had this raw animal-boy been left in his ease he would have grown into a beast-man. Pain fashioned him into a "human-boy" (Mr. Chadband's tautology was somewhat prophetic you see), and the angel-man came forth into being.

I remember a similar impression which was produced upon me by the engravings in the biography of one of our noblest Americans—Horace Bushnell. The face of the young man and the face of the old man were as the faces of two different men. He had worked hard and had suffered much, and, at the end, the purpose of all those dark days of personal sorrow and of public strife for truth told in his very face; through which shone the soul that had been fashioned, in fiery troubles and by hard blows, into a noble beauty. I see the same parable in a picture as I raise my eyes from my desk to the glorious face of Frederick Maurice, and recall the stern,

hard, unlovely face of the younger Maurice. The butterfly had come out of the grub. The saint had risen up within the man. The son of man had become the Son of God.

Do you need to be told, as you go in and out among men, who has suffered? Is not the secret written in the lines of strength and sweetness that mould the faces of the disciplined ones into the forms of character? I met lately a splendid woman whom I had not seen for some years. I had known her as a lovely wife, in the joy of a happy home. I found her a saddened widow; her hair whitened by grief, but on her face a strength and calm as of one of God's saints; and as I looked at her the secret of sorrow was revealed. I almost seemed to see, in her presence, the unseen touches of a Sculptor of Souls, fashioning such a spirit:—

“And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature moulding man.”

“No affliction seemeth for the present to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.”

There is an awful mystery in pain. We have not light enough upon our earth to clear that mystery. But we find light enough to assure us that there is a meaning in this mystery, and that the meaning is gracious and good. My brother in suffering, I can-

not answer your agonized—Why? I can say, as the deepest lesson which I have learned in life—

“ I should utterly have fainted,
But that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord
In the land of the living.
O tarry Thou the Lord's time ;
Be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart ;
And put thy trust in the Lord.”

(4) The secret of sorrow is the secret also of sin. Moral evil, as well as mental and physical evil, has an educative function to discharge. To be made capable of goodness, man must have been made capable of badness. Character—*i.e.*, conscious choice of virtue and purposed obedience to its laws—can be achieved only at the risk of a loss of character; by opening the possibility of a conscious rejection of virtue and of a purposed disobedience to its laws. A free moral being may turn out a sinner as well as a saint, a devil as well as an angel. But even such an experience of the wrong choice will teach man; will teach him as no other lesson can do. The conflict with temptation will exercise his conscience. The fall into sin will reveal to him his weakness. The consequences of wrong doing will illumine the laws of life. A diseased body, a fortune wasted, a home forfeited, a name gone—these will be sharp, stern instructors in righteousness. Shame and remorse will scourge him to

repentance and will train him into reformation. Sin experienced will thus save man out of sin. The fall will prove the first step in a reformation.

This is what History teaches us of mankind. Society has learned righteousness through the outworkings of iniquity, purity through the consequences of lust, brotherliness through the curse of selfish strife. In no way will civilization be persuaded to seek the higher life, until the torments of the lower life drive it upward. Individual souls repeat the same story. Man leaves the Father's house and tries the life of "the world, the flesh and the Devil," and then, when the famine arises, he comes back to the Father's house, a sad but saved prodigal, saying:—"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; and am no more worthy to be called thy son." One of our best known writers, towards the close of a brave career which had been flawed by weakness, wrote a poem which he meant for a parable of life. In this poem the hero is shown the moral evil of humanity; and, in the full sight of it, replies:—

"I see, nor shudder, vice outlived is dead,
And feeds its purest opposite in us.
No scent of mould is on the rose's leaves;
No stain of slime is on the lotus cup."

A greater poet taught the same truth, in a vision of heaven:—"And one of the elders answered, say-

ing unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

(5) The seer has led us on into the vision which, alone, illumines the problem of pain sufficiently to enable us to tarry the Lord's time, while we put our trust in the Lord—the vision of Immortality. The meaning of pain for mankind at large would be more than hinted, were this life all; but the meaning of pain for individual souls would lie still in an awful shadow. Mankind has a future of progress upon the earth. Men die in the midst of their education, having had the pangs without the profits of a disciplining pain. If there is no life hereafter, on into which the education of earth shall run—I, for one, can find no sufficient solution of the problem of individual suffering. But, if there is a hereafter—then a great light breaks through the clouds that

hang low over earth. The unknown author of that wonderful drama of the soul—The Book of Job—could gain, through all his wearying reasonings, no glimpse of the secret of suffering till the hope of immortality dawned upon him. In its light he saw light. In its light we still see light—clear, calm, comforting.

Never shall I forget a talk of one bright mid-summer day, the last full interchange of soul with one whom indeed it were better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all! With the shadows of death stealing over him, unconsciously to either of us, we talked of life and of its meaning. And the great-brained, noble-hearted man, in the prime of life, looking forward to higher tasks than any he had yet essayed, affirmed the faith which was rising into clearer form as he was nearing the hours when he should need it:—"The end of life is character: the experiences of life form our education in character." And so I look after him to see, in the visions of the soul, a larger life and a nobler work.

"Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!"

This is the secret of sorrow and of suffering which all the deepest spirits read in the problem of pain, and with which we may solace our souls.

With the peace-filled spirit of the sweet singer of Amesbury, waiting the coming of him "who holds the keys of all the creeds," we may answer to the awful questionings of our hearts :—

" I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within ;
I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin.

" Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed stake my spirit clings ;
I know that God is good."

XI.

JESUS—THE CHRIST.

“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”—Matt. xvi: 15, 16.

PETER’S Confession of Faith remains the central article of the Creed of Christendom. We affirm each Sunday in our worship—“I believe in * * * Jesus Christ, His only son our Lord.” The two great Catholic Creeds—the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed—are chiefly occupied with the fuller statement of this affirmation concerning Jesus, the Christ.

This faith in Jesus is not a mere addition to the Christian’s faith in God; it is a development of his faith in God. We do not believe in God *and* in Jesus Christ; we believe in God *through* Jesus Christ. Our faith in God, as drawn from the revelation in Nature and the revelation in History, is certified and cleared through the revelation in the person of Jesus, the Christ. Christianity is not a mere Theism; it is a Theism embodied in an Institution; which Institution is founded upon a Historic Fact, a Spiritual Intuition concerning that

Historic Fact, and a Philosophy justifying that Spiritual Intuition in terms of the intellect.

The historic fact is that Jesus of Nazareth was the founder of the Christian Church; whose teachings gave that Church its ideas, which ideas embody in the noblest form known to man the essential principles of pure and universal religion; and whose life gave that Church its ideals, which ideals clothe in perfect form the noblest ethical aspirations of humanity. This fact constitutes Jesus the Head of the Church, the Master of Life for all who would walk in the Spirit, the Anointed One, in whom the supreme revelation of God to man is made—the Christ. Could we believe no more concerning Jesus than that which is contained in the affirmation of this historic fact, we should believe that which ought to make us sincere and earnest Christians—followers in our lives of the Master of Life. Believing and “doing” this truth, as St. John would have said, we shall be led on into the fuller faith of the Church in the Christ of God; as, out of the confession of this simple belief which Peter made, the early Church itself was led on into the spiritual intuition that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,” and, in the effort to express this intuition intellectually, was drawn yet further on into the sublimities of the philosophy formulated in the Nicene Creed.

Has our modern knowledge really called in ques-

tion this historic fact? Has criticism so clouded the majestic figure which comes before us in the memories of this Holy Week that we need hesitate to pledge our hearts and lives afresh to the following of this Crucified Nazarene, as our soul's Master and Lord?

I.

It is a fact that Jesus of Nazareth actually lived.

You may sometime hear this statement challenged, among not over well-educated people, who have been reading rather belated objections to Christianity. Possibly you may, at one time or another, have come across some of those curious books which embody the results of large reading in wholly undigested forms; books which oracularly intimate that their writers have discovered the secret of the origin of Christianity, and that the secret is one which would dissipate forever the notion of any historical Jesus. Uneducated minds, on becoming aware of the curious coincidences between Christianity and the far Eastern legends, and of the action in the early Church of the myth-making process which is found so widely spread among mankind, are fascinated by the (to them) brand-new notion that Christianity is only the result of the working over of more ancient legends and myths, which took place in an age of unrivalled mental fer-

mentation, and that it is destitute of any adequate historical basis. Such learned nonsense is ever re-appearing, and making "an immense sensation" in certain quarters; but it carries no weight whatever with real students. Such books are the despair of the Muse of History.

Doubtless, there are most singular coincidences between the Christian tradition and the Buddhist tradition, for example. Influences from the far East were unquestionably at work in the early Church. Christianity certainly arose in a period of most remarkable mental fermentation. The new-found interchange of thought, following upon the intercommunication among various races which had been established by the Roman Empire, led to "a cross fertilization of ideas," on a scale unequalled before in the known history of man. But, whatever may have been the connection between early Christianity and the Eastern religions, the highest authorities declare that we have as yet no data from which to pass intelligent judgment upon the matter. Doubtless, there was in that period a most extensive action of the legend-forming and myth-making tendencies. An age of such mental excitement must have been profoundly stirred by the life of one like Jesus, and its imagination must have drawn a nimbus of legend and myth around his form. It could not have been otherwise. But, however nebulous this enlarged figure of the imagination may

appear, there is nothing in such a process to call in question the historic fact of an actual Jesus, which was the core of the legend and the myth. Literary and philological criticism has gone through the stage when it was tempted to evaporate history into legend and myth. It has found that at the heart of history there lies fact—however disguised by poetry. Dr. Schliemann's exhuming of the site of Troy has had a healthy influence upon the extravagant criticism which had proved that the *Iliad* had no historic basis. Even that wild fable of the ancients concerning Atlantis, the lost island of the western seas, turns out an apparently substantial memory of the submerged continent which our savants now regard as a fact.

Whatever the drapery around the form of Jesus of Nazareth, that form is a most substantial fact of history. Do you ask me how I know this? I answer by pointing you, first, to the historic institution—the Christian Church. As other existing institutions can be traced up to their origin, so the Christian Church can be traced up to the age of Jesus. It has been in Europe since then. It was not in Europe before that period. Do you ask again—How did it originate? After a long battle between the theory which found the source of great movements in the social forces always working in a creative period, and the theory which found that source in the force of some great individuality,

we have reached a reconciliation. Social forces bring humanity to the birth-bed, but the birth is always a great man, in whom the great movement is embodied. Philosophy affirms, through Hegel,—“At the head of all that takes place, therefore of all that belongs to universal history, stand individuals.”

This is pre-eminently true of what may be called the historic religions, in contradistinction from the ethnic or race religions. Brahmanism may have no historic founder, but Judaism is inconceivable without some Moses, Buddhism without a Buddha, and Mohammedanism without a Mohammed. Christianity is such an historic religion. It is simply inconceivable without some actual Jesus. It is an institution which is “the lengthened shadow of a man.” It is charged all through and through with personal associations, memories, ideas and feelings. The Church bears the name of its founder. Its central rite is the memorial of him. Its every distinguishing feature betrays the existence of some lofty spirit, out of whose life it sprang.

If we knew of no personal source of Christianity, we could never rest until we had discovered him. As Leverrier groped his way to the discovery of the unknown Neptune, so our critics would have to grope their way to the discovery of the unknown Founder of Christianity. What man is known to history who could be suspected of being that origi-

nator of the Christian religion? The only one who could even be suggested is Paul. And, as a critic like John Stuart Mill saw, even Paul was not a force commensurate with the personal influence working in Christianity. Paul was an undoubted historic personage, but he affirmed that he was a disciple of another and greater Master. He stands with his finger lifted, pointing the world to Jesus of Nazareth.

Of the actuality of Jesus we have historic evidence of the most incontestable character, embodied in a literature. There is no question whatever that our four Gospels have come down to us from a very early date in the Christian era. We know this in the same way in which we know that the Plays of Shakespeare have come down to us from the days of Queen Elizabeth. We can trace the existence of Shakespeare's dramas up through the generations, by the references to them in the literature of different periods. We can thus trace the Gospels up to the early centuries of our era. It is needless to enter into any argument about precise dates. It is nowhere, I believe, denied that the Gospels were in existence, as written documents, by 300 A.D. They were not then written *de novo*. They were the work of many revisions and re-editings of earlier Gospels. Before those early written Gospels, there was a still earlier unwritten Gospel—the body of oral tradition, which was slowly shaping itself out

of a vast mass of material, in the Church, by a process of natural selection of the best and truest memories. This process certainly carries up the testimony of the Gospel story within a few years of the death of Jesus; to somewhere between 110 A.D. and 60 A.D.—that is, almost to the age of Jesus.

Paul's leading "Letters" are of unquestioned authenticity and genuineness. They date from A.D. 53, onwards. That is, they are removed by but about a generation from the life-time of Jesus. Paul's ministry was separated by no more than a decade from the close of the ministry of Jesus. His conversion dates from somewhere between 36 A.D. and 38 A.D. In about two years, so says Keim, from the crucifixion, Paul's strong, keen, hostile mind was won to an absolute certitude concerning the work of Jesus of Nazareth.

There is no more question about the historic reality of Jesus of Nazareth, than about the historic reality of Julius Cæsar. The nature of the evidence is one and the same in each case; while the amount and character of the evidence is vastly more impressive concerning the Nazarene Rabbi than concerning the Roman Statesman. The story of Jesus has stood a steady fire of hostile or suspicious criticism, from the first century to the nineteenth century. The historic fact has shewn itself criticism-proof. Renan has settled the matter for those who questioned the churchly critics. When Napoleon vis-

ited the learned Herder, he asked him whether Jesus Christ had really lived. It is no longer pertinent to ask that question. Our only question should be as to how he lived.

II.

It is a fact that Jesus of Nazareth lived substantially as reported in the first three Evangelists.

I specify these three Evangelists because their testimony is sufficient for the traditional picture of Jesus, and because their testimony is admitted by those who regard the fourth Gospel as a book of later date and of less strictly historic nature than the preceding Gospels. The portraiture thus given we may without hesitancy accept as substantially historic.

I am reminded, however, of that which I have but just acknowledged, viz., the fact that there were legendary tendencies and myth-making processes at work in the early church, upon the tradition of Jesus; and I hear some one inquiring—If it be granted that *a* Jesus lived, can it be established that *the* Jesus of the Church really lived? “Are we not forced,” you ask, “to confess that the veritable Jesus of history is hopelessly lost in the idealized Christ of the imagination?” Most unquestionably, as I have already acknowledged, there were such legendary tendencies and myth-making

processes at work in the mind of the early Church. That which our fathers suspected we have proven. But, in proving the presence and action of these natural tendencies and processes, we have been led to study the nature of legend and myth more carefully, and thus to define, with tolerable accuracy, their bounds and limits. We can now not only suspect but know, if we choose, about where to look for them ; and we can not only suspect but know, fairly well, where they are not to be found. It is possible for us to reach a restful certainty, concerning the *bona fide* historical residuum of the tradition of Jesus, such as our fathers could not have enjoyed.

Any one who is suspicious of the substantial accuracy of our Gospels, cannot better treat his haunting fears of legend and myth than by a study of the apocryphal gospels. Several complete editions of them are accessible to any reader. In them we see the full-blown legends and myths of early Christianity. Their characteristics are very plainly perceptible. They magnify the powers of Jesus extravagantly. They see in him the magical wonder-worker. They clothe even the boy Jesus with the robes of the thaumaturgist. Supernatural power becomes preternatural power. The deeds of Jesus no longer look like the natural action of a higher intelligence ; they look like the unnatural action of a man who has found the secret word that

enables him to play the pranks of the magician. There is an unrestrained marvellousness about them; they have let go the hold of fact. There is no moral aim manifested in them; they are no longer wrought-parables. Jesus uses his power to astonish, affright and punish men. One of the most charming bits which George McDonald has ever written is that chapter of the "Vicar's Daughter" which describes a Bible-class, in which the hard-headed working-people are led to see the essential difference between the stories of the apocryphal gospels and those of the true Gospels. A Sunday afternoon spent over that chapter and over some of the apocryphal books themselves would leave little need of anything more being said to you upon this question. Placed by the side of these stories, most of the narratives in our Gospels look intrinsically possible, if not probable; unaffectedly natural and nobly beautiful. You perceive at once that our Gospels represent a winnowed tradition of Jesus; that a severe and searching sifting had been going on in the early Church, and that a vast mass of matter had been rejected as unworthy of credence. You would thus come to a study of our Gospel-stories with a new respect for them and a new trust in them.

You ask, however—Are our Gospels thoroughly winnowed of the chaff of legend and myth? I answer—Could books written by real men, under

such conditions as I have indicated, and in such a yeasty epoch, have been absolutely free from such influences? Books which purported to be the story of Jesus and which were free from such marks would be convicted of being unhistorical documents. But, if it be granted that there are still left traces of legend and myth, you may ask again—How, then, can we be sure as to what is fact and what is fancy in our Gospels? I answer once more—Practically there is not much difficulty about this matter. The incidents that one most suspects another suspects also. There is a clear consensus of opinion among thoughtful readers about the really dubious points. They are not so many nor so important as to affect the substance of the story. When all the incidents which are fairly open to such suspicion are dropped out from the narrative, the public life of Jesus moves on in the same order and along the same lines, in the ancient majesty and beauty. If every touch that has been drawn in by legend were rubbed out, the face of Jesus would stand substantially as now we see it.

If this seems a rather vague position, let me define it more closely. Were there three wholly different lives of Julius Cæsar in existence, which, in addition to the materials that each introduced, had a large body of material common to all three writers, we should feel that these common contents had an authority which could not be claimed by the

rest of the narrations. Just such a body of material, common to all three evangelists, we find in our Gospels. It gives us quite a full story of Jesus, in which we miss nothing that any one can count of vital value to the picture of the Master. We can go back even of this groundwork of the three Gospels. If the three lives of Cæsar held, scattered through their common portions, fragments which were clothed in the same language, and if these fragments, when put together, pieced out a roughly-connected story, we should be absolutely sure that we had therein the relic of a most ancient and official document. Just such an original and official document of Primitive Christianity can be extracted from the three Gospels. Through the portions of the Gospels which are common to them all, there runs a thread of story which is given in the very same language.

This thread of story, when drawn from the body of the Gospels, gives us the framework of the traditional life of Jesus. It connects the mission of Jesus with that of John; contains a number of pithy 'sayings' of the Master, and three of his parables; the dispute with the Pharisees about the Sabbath, etc.; several wonders of healing, the stilling of the storm, the feeding of the four thousand and the transfiguration; the great spiritual truth of his teaching, the fatherhood of God; his personal claims—the power of forgiving sins, the duty of

men to devote their lives to Him, etc.; an admission of his Messiahship, in immediate connection with which he prepares to die, predicting his return to life again; a prophetic description of the fall of the temple and of the subsequent triumph of his disciples; and finally his last supper with his disciples and his arrest and crucifixion. It has been left for our modern microscopic criticism to extricate this remarkable kernel of the story of Jesus; and to find in its verbal identity, under the various combinations to which it is subjected by the different evangelists, a transcript of the original document which was generally received among the Christians, which had, even in a very early day, established a sort of prescriptive authority through the Churches, and which may therefore be called the authorized record that the Primitive Church gave of her Head.

In this official document we miss much that we would not willingly lose from the tradition of Jesus, and one thing that most Christians feel they could not lose—the story of the resurrection, *i.e.*, of the appearing of Jesus from the spirit-world. But this bare outline of the life of Jesus is very considerably clothed upon with details, when we add to it the material really belonging to it, which is contained in common by the three evangelists, though in differing language. Among the features which would be thus restored to the triple tradition, would be

the story of the resurrection. This triple tradition contains little that can fairly be suspected of having been colored by the imagination.

Were there then nothing else in the Gospel-story that we could wholly trust, this triple tradition, in its larger shape, would amply serve to assure us of the substantial accuracy of the historic form of Jesus. Not that such a suspicion concerning the bulk of the three Gospels is to be for a moment allowed—only that, if fear drives men in upon the inner line of intrenchments, those lines would be found to cover all that is vital for our belief in the historic fact of Jesus the Christ.

But, you say that even this three-fold story includes some miraculous incidents, and thus points to the presence of legend and myth. It certainly does represent Jesus as a wonder-worker. But note, I pray you, the characteristics of his wonderful action. He is not represented as a miracle-worker in any such sense as we usually attach to these words. He does not go about to establish his claim by performing marvels. The uniform testimony of the whole four Gospels is that he discouraged such a notion, and refused to use the power which he felt that he possessed in order to prove his mission. Jesus himself did not consider his wonderful works as miracles, in the sense of that word which offends us; nor are they claimed by the evangelists as violations of law or as interruptions of law. St. John

expressly calls them "signs"—signs that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, that the reign of man over the disorders of his own nature and over the forces of the physical nature at large, as the child of the king, coming of age, was at hand; signs that at last a man had been born who really had "dominion over" the physical forces of the earth, as one made in the image of God. Whatever wonders were wrought were wrought spontaneously, as the natural action of the powers which were in the Son of Man.

His chief wonders were works of healing. Why should he not have healed the sick, as is reported of him? Look all around you at the facts which are recurring again in our land, as they have occurred again and again in history. Discount all you please in these stories to humbug. Allow for any amount of charlatanism on the part of professors of the Faith-Cure and of the Mind Cure, and for any amount of imagination on the part of the credulous patients—and there remains a residuum of hard fact which will not away at your bidding. Men and women are being healed of certain disorders, in a manner that is unaccountable to the practitioner who knows of no force in therapeutics save pills. It is too soon to dogmatize about this fact. Doubtless there is herein no violation of law, nor any suspension of law, but only the action of higher laws and higher forces than those usually recognized.

There should be no difficulty, on the part of any intelligent person, in discerning that the forces of the inner nature, the forces which are stored in mind, in conscience and in will, may be well-nigh omnipotent over the physical nature. As man becomes increasingly a mental being rather than a physical being, we ought to look to mind for the action upon matter of forces which have not been as fully experienced in earlier days—though these higher energies must be still under the old reign of law. “The wise soul expels disease”—as sings Emerson. What diseases, then, must such a wise soul as was in Jesus have expelled? Try seriously to consider what a stupendous force, intellectual and moral, must have been stored in the man who made Christianity; what an enthronement of will above the physical laws there must have been in one who lived in perfect obedience to the moral laws; what undreamed of powers must have streamed from him who lived so close to the heart of Nature, so open to the Soul which breathed through it—and you will not wonder at the works of Jesus.

If you think that this is taking the mighty works of Jesus out of the sphere of what we have known as miracles, I answer that you are right—but that we never should have imagined such a sphere, which nowhere exists, in so far as we can see, in the heavens above or in the earth beneath, in physics or in ethics, in man or in God. There is even a divine

nature. That nature has its laws. God, as the apostle saith, "cannot lie." There is a universal reign of law. There are laws *and* laws—higher and lower spheres in the one all-embracing order. As man grows out of the physical sphere he climbs into a spiritual sphere—only to find that his new powers, apparently setting the laws of the material realm at defiance, are still the action of forces which own the sweep of law.

If you think that this view denies the supernatural character of the forces which were working in Jesus, I answer that it does deny their preternatural character, that it does affirm their thorough naturalness, but that it also affirms, in a new and deeper and most natural sense, their supernaturalness ; as, through all the ascending ranks of power in the hierarchy of Creation, there is seen to move an ever-increasing effluence of the God whose will is the energy of creation, as his nature is its law.

If you think that such a conception of the wonders of Jesus reduces his powers to a level with ordinary human forces, I answer that, if it be a reducing of those powers at all, it is most certainly to no plane of ordinary human forces, but to the plane of the most extraordinary capacities of humanity ; that however, in reality, it is no lowering of the might of Jesus, but rather an uplifting of humanity's energies to their highest reaches, the glorification of all budding potentialities of the actual man in the flow-

ering potencies of the ideal man. That the wonderful works of Jesus are not to be viewed as the exceptional powers of one man, but as the common powers of all men who shall through him enter into the royal life of the sons of God, is clear from the fact, as fact it seems to have been, that he sent out his disciples to repeat his wonders. He at least appears to have believed that if they truly learned of him they could do as he had done. Of the man who believed in him he said—"Greater works than these shall he do." And who is authorized to draw a hard and fast line of chronology around the age to which these words were limited? Let us live in his spirit, and you and I may know hints of the secret of his power.

Of his wonderful control over the order of the outer nature, as held in memory in two or three stories of the triple tradition, let me simply say that, in an age when such miracles are being wrought as we, ordinary men, are achieving, it would be the height of folly for us to deny outright the possibility of such an one as Jesus having had mystic powers, whose rare action may have been embalmed, confusedly perhaps, in these narratives. The presence of astonishing forces over nature, latent in man, is being disclosed to our age, in a most unprecedented manner. Science is giving man a control over physical forces that would have seemed absolutely miraculous to earlier ages. Physiology is dis-

closing, in the phenomena that are grouped together under the generalization of Hypnotism, a superiority of man to the ordinary laws of nature which would have been scouted a generation ago. Psychical research societies are scientifically investigating the mysterious forces which have given rise to Spiritualism, and are already on the track of powers which are enough to drive an old-fashioned materialist mad. From the far East we are learning, in book after book, of the wonders which have been an open secret, through ages, to those who have been initiated into occultism. Some of the more astounding incidents recorded concerning Jesus take on a strangely realistic air in the light of facts which are thus coming to our knowledge. We may be, perhaps, little nearer to an understanding of them, but it looks now as though we were only a step from believing in them of necessity. The arrogant denial outright of the possibility of miracles, which men learned from Hume, is forever stricken dumb. In the great word of Emerson—"Every solid in the universe is ready to become a fluid at the approach of mind, and the power to flux it is the measure of mind." The most sceptical will do well to maintain a becoming silence before the wonders that are reported of one like Jesus.

III.

It is a fact that Jesus taught substantially as reported in the first three evangelists.

Doubtless the early Church, as it passed into the theological stage and began to develop dogma, cast back upon the original narratives the light of its thoughts and speculations. It could not have failed to do so. When an idea is in a man's mind he cannot help seeing that idea in any words of others which even seem to suggest it. Let one be possessed by a certain notion, and the stars will shimmer with hints of it, the winds will whisper it confidentially, and the men whom he passes daily on the streets will betray the secret in their eyes. We should expect to find, therefore, in the Gospels, as we have them, the traces of this reflected consciousness of the generations following the original disciples. We do find such marks of later times—a reading back into some of the narratives and discourses of the interpretations which the Church had come to make of them. It is not necessary to suspect the good faith of the early Christians, who, in transcribing the traditional discourses of Jesus, often thought to make them clearer by adding glosses on the margin of the manuscripts, which subsequently crept into the text itself, as part of the very words of the Master.

This fact of the interlining of the original Gospels by later hands does not, however, confuse the character of the essential teachings of Jesus. Leave out every utterance that is now seriously suspected of having been "restored" by later hands, and you will still hold the substance of the ethical and spiritual teachings of Jesus. The triple tradition, in its narrow, literal form, preserves enough to assure us of this. In its larger form, the three-fold story gives us an ample fund of certificated material. Even outside of it, there is a general consensus of opinion among the leading critics, I believe, as to the authenticity of the immortal words of Jesus. The pungent ethical 'sayings,' the graphic parables, the profound spiritual words—these stand substantially untouched by criticism. The Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, the parable of the Prodigal Son—every great 'teaching' is unquestionably the work of Jesus of Nazareth.

Matthew Arnold is most certainly right when he affirms that the critical sense, which is being so strongly developed in our generation, cannot be dubious about the great 'sayings' of Jesus, whatever the external evidence may be concerning them. They ring upon the soul in such golden tones as render it simply impossible to mistake them. They ring so differently from the greatest words of the greatest disciple in the early Church—Paul—that no one can confuse the sound of the gold with the

sound of the silver. St. John's Gospel is the noblest single work of the early Church. It records the great words of Jesus which its writer had learned of sources that were not open to the other evangelists; but it weaves these words in with utterances of the writer himself, with his own notes and comments. A discourse which begins, perhaps, with veritable words of Jesus, runs off into additions of the author; and there is no hint given, on the surface, of where Jesus stops speaking and of where John takes up the discourse. The third chapter is a striking illustration of this characteristic of the book, which is so perplexing to the mere pedantic critic. Yet how little trouble even those whose only critical apparatus is the possession of the spiritual sense have in detecting the places where it is certain that Jesus is speaking! The Master's voice betrays itself unerringly. The figure of the man who taught "as never man taught" stands forth clear-cut against the background of time. We may be absolutely sure that we know substantially what and how he taught.

IV.

It is a fact that the character of Jesus stands the fires of criticism, and that it appears to us, as to our fathers, practically perfect.

I qualify the adjective 'perfect,' not because I

have any question myself as to the real sinlessness of Jesus, but simply because I assume here nothing concerning the historic records beyond their general trustworthiness, and because I would claim nothing which any one may not, I think, fairly concede, on this ground. There can be no question that the impression which the record leaves is that of a man who was practically perfect. A few flaws have indeed been picked out by some uncommon eyes in this holy character. Most men, on examining them, are filled with a new wonder before the man who so lived that such things are counted flaws in him. The saint would not need any papers of canonization who had no graver faults to confess. There is an interpretation fairly open to each of these few fancied flaws which leaves the character of Jesus unsullied. The mists—one cannot honestly call these obscurations clouds—which seem to hang around certain actions and words, are almost transfused, to our sight, from the light which is struggling through them. Such as they are, they look like wisps of vapor rising from the imagination of the men who looked up into the face of this Sun of Righteousness, rather than like spots in the Sun itself. Had a perfectly pure medium of transmission been attainable we should, in all probability, have seen clearly a perfect character.

But this admission, you say, may work the other way. If we have to allow anything for the imper-

fection of the record, why may we not have to allow so much as to endanger the substantial sinlessness of Jesus? You remind me that, after all, we have very fragmentary records of him; that we see very little of the details of his life, in which such a great soul would have been most apt to betray any inherent weakness. We know, too, you remind me, how naturally love and reverence transfigure the character of one who has been taken away from earth; and we cannot fail to see how peculiarly powerful must have been the action of such a tendency upon the memory of one who so profoundly impressed men. How then are we to rest in implicit trust upon the picture of that miracle of miracles—a perfect life? First of all, here, as everywhere, by facing the full force of every honest difficulty.

Granting, then, all that is fairly objected, the traditional belief does not seem to me to be invalidated. The moral force originating such a movement as Christianity implies a most unusual personality in its originator. Jesus certainly made upon his immediate disciples the impression of a mysteriously holy character. It was this impression which won their faith and which converted a foe like Paul. The presence of these few apparent flaws in the story redeem it from the suspicion which otherwise we ought to feel towards it. Without any such features we might think that the

writers had been studiously passing over dubious points in his life. With these features present in the story, we perceive the frankness of the writers, and have no excuse for such a suspicion. In the apocryphal gospels we see the sort of picture that would have been given by men who were intent upon magnifying Jesus, and the contrast is very reassuring. There is a naturalness in the air of the Jesus of our Gospels, which is the best of all evidences of the truthfulness of the portrait. Real character always betrays itself unconsciously, somewhere, at some time, through any nimbus that has drawn around the great man. This man evidently was the man he seemed—and he seemed a god. As he walked with God, he kept step easily with the Eternal.

Moreover—and this no art of man could have conceived, and no craft of man could have executed—the character of Jesus is not only negatively without the shadow of sin, it is positively a full and complete embodiment of the human ideal of goodness, a symmetric and rounded image of a perfect soul. The various ideals of different individuals and races, which conflict one with another as found scattered through mankind, are in this man blended into one consistent whole; so that you, as well as I, men as well as women, Americans as well as Hindoos, can look up to him as to one in whom all alike behold their best.

Of all this I say no more now, since I have spoken of it at length in my printed *Studies of Jesus*. We must perforce, I think, bow before Jesus as before a perfect man.

V.

It is a fact that Jesus really fulfilled the historical development of Israel's religious life, and completed its growing consciousness of a mission for the supreme revelation of God in human history.

It is needless to enlarge at all on this point. Our fathers' faith proves thoroughly right, though the outward form of that belief has changed so greatly. Not by any mere fulfilment of miraculous predictions does Jesus prove himself the one whom prophets and kings desired to see, but by the far deeper mystery of his fulfilment of a nation's organic growth into the knowledge of God, by the incontestable fact that its budding aspirations and ideals and hopes and faiths were all brought to the flower in his life and thought. He taught the truth for which the nation had waited. He was the Light whose dawning had been felt in the illumination of the prophets. Truly could he say, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

VI.

It is a fact that this Jesus, who thus fulfilled the revelation made through Israel, equally fulfils the revelations made through other races.

This declaration is no mirage of theological fancy, but the sober statement of the conclusion fairly deducible from our modern knowledge of the great ethnic religions. Admitting every truth which is found in the Sacred Books of the world as, equally with the truths of Israel's Bible, inspirations from God; rejoicing to recognize and revere all such truths wherever found; depreciating no other Master in order to exalt the son of Mary—it yet remains to be confessed, as a result of our new Science of Comparative Religion, that all the truths which humanity holds are summed, in their most perfect form, in the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. What each great Master of the soul affirms of permanent truth, Jesus affirms. What of vital truth any one fails to teach, he declares. Their various half-truths are taken up in him into the harmony of the full truth—the symphony of religion. Jesus is the Master of the masters. This position is so generally conceded that there seems to be no necessity of verifying it. Time will not allow of the illustrations which would render it impressive.

If you suspect this judgment as the opinion of a

minister of an orthodox Church, examine for yourselves the words of the great spiritual teachers, and the pages of the great Race-Bibles; or ask of authorities whose orthodoxy is not so rigid as to make them 'suspect.' The distinguished Unitarian, Dr. James Freeman Clarke, placed upon the title page of his "Ten Great Religions of the World," a significant device. The circle of religion finds its centre in Judaism; around which, facing out to all four quarters, is Christianity; while in the circumference are Brahmanism, Buddhism, the religion of Persia, China, Egypt, etc.; each of which, standing in polar opposition to some other form of religion, finds itself but a segment of Christianity; in which all alike draw to a unity of essence. If this be thought a Christian view, consider the fact that the most remarkable religious revival and reform in the far East—the Brahmo Somaj—itself completely outside the pale of Christianity, claiming to be a purely natural unfolding of India's thought and life from within the historic religion of the land, turns, at least in one powerful branch, instinctively to Jesus as the great Master of the Soul. Read "The Oriental Christ," written by that man of God, Babu Mozoomdar, and you will need no further evidence of what I have affirmed. However they interpret the mystery of his nature, men of all races—when freed from the prejudices of their education, and when, penetrating through the veil which ecclesiastic and

dogmatic Christianity have drawn over Jesus, they confront the real man of history—own in him the Supreme Master of the Spirit. The key-stone of the arch of religion is found in Jesus of Nazareth.

VII.

It is a fact that this Jesus continues to lead the life and thought of progressive humanity towards the morality and the religion of the future.

The ethical teachings of Jesus are sometimes faulted, but always, I believe, from a misapprehension of his meaning. We are learning that, even where they have been most suspected, they really hold the ideals which are projecting the lines of human progress. A generation ago men deemed his social and economic teachings utterly impracticable, and asked—"Is it possible to lead a Christian life in this world?" We are learning, "so as by fire," that all theories which antagonize his social principles are impracticable; and that it is impossible to lead any other than a Christian life, if we would have society hold together. Considering the years through which I have preached this heresy, to ears that were affectionately patient of my hobby, it was refreshing to hear from one of your strongest minds the other day, a confession that his own studies had led him to the conviction that what is known as Christian Socialism is the only way out of

the gathering difficulties of our industrial civilization. We must learn to be Christians or we shall cease to be civilized. The ethical ideals of Jesus, honestly followed, would bring down the kingdom of God rapidly upon our earth. He is the Master of Morals.

The spiritual teachings of Jesus are well-nigh universally conceded to present a practically perfect expression of essential religion. The Fatherhood of God, the Spirituality of Man, the Forgiveness of Sins, Immortality—these are truths which seem inevitably destined to form the coming creed of Universal Religion. A return from our religions *about* the Christ to the religion *of* Christ would give the weary world the faith for which it is waiting. Practical men say, and say rightly—"The Sermon on the Mount is a good enough religion for me." So the world is concluding, in that voice of the people which is the voice of God. The most beautiful realization of the ideal of the union of religion and morality of which I know, opens the articles of association of a huge Industrial Corporation with an affirmation of the Golden Rule as the law of God for man. This is the sign in which Christianity is to conquer. The throne of earth waits for him who can teach men to live as brothers because they are the children of one Father.

VIII.

Add the facts which I have laid before you, and what is the sum of them? Jesus actually lived. He lived substantially as reported of him. He taught substantially as has been represented. He lived practically perfect. He fulfils the historic evolution of all race religions. He leads humanity into the morality and the religion of the future.

If indeed these be facts, then Jesus is *the fact* of history—that is the fact of Nature, so far as we know it. Nature leads up to man. He holds her secret. Man's nature leads up to spirit. The human spirit leads up to Jesus, the Supreme Man. He holds the secret of the Sphinx. In him is the key to the processes of Evolution. "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God."

Before him then let us bow with awe. Since we are such mysteries to ourselves, what must be the mystery of such a man? Whatever thought we fashion about him, of this let us be sure—His life is the light of men. His powers are the norm of true manhood. His thoughts of God are the faiths of the soul. His commands are the laws of our nature. His character is the vision which we are to follow. He is the Master of Life for all who would walk in the spirit. As such he claims your homage,

your loyalty, your enthusiasm, your obedience; saying to every earnest soul of man—"Follow me." When tempted to turn aside from following after him, we must fain come back and say to him—"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Fifteen years ago, I had drawn in gold, behind and above the holy table standing in this church, the words which seemed best to indicate the message which I should bring for you, among whom I came to teach and to preach. Those words face us still, the inmost faith of my soul, growing stronger as I grow older—"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." Walk in that way, my brothers; know that truth; live that life.

XII.

IMMORTALITY IN THE LIGHT OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE.

“In hope of eternal life.”—Titus, i: 2.

THE faith in immortality rests on grounds which lie far below the reach of any formal proofs. It is affirmed as an intuition of our spiritual nature, a universal and necessary instinct of the soul. It ought to be accepted in the unquestioning trust which we usually repose upon the affirmations of consciousness. Nevertheless, inasmuch as we are reasoning creatures, we must needs, at times, give a reason for the hope that is in us. We ought to be able intelligently to meet the questions which arise concerning this great faith; and, though we may not prove immortality, we should satisfy ourselves, not only that no one can disprove it, but, that no one can seriously discredit it.

On successive Easters, I have drawn your thought to special phases of our modern knowledge, in as far as that knowledge bears upon the faith of Immortality. I have thus sought to show you that our great hope is not invalidated by anything that we know, in the realms of mental science and of

moral science, but that, on the contrary, it throws its buttresses out through each sphere of our new thought. To-day, let us consider in how far physical science affects this ancient hope and faith.

I.

Physical science has undoubtedly created a mental predisposition which is unfavorable to this belief, and by which we are all more or less affected.

Belief is necessarily determined, to a considerable extent, by one's mental predispositions. A man's aim may be to free his mind from every preconception, and to investigate a question with absolute honesty. None the less, his judgment must be formed largely by influences which have been at work unconsciously upon him. Any one who has watched the mental processes of a jury must have been convinced of the fact that one and the same evidence, which ought to produce one and the same conclusion in each of the twelve jurymen, will always, in reality, produce very different convictions in their minds. One man will be absolutely convinced of the innocence of the defendant by the same testimony which has, as absolutely, convinced another man of his guilt. The evidence is the same; the mental attitudes of the men differ. They stand in different angles toward the same light.

Subtle and complex influences, working perhaps through many years, have determined these mental attitudes of the men. Idiosyncracies of temperament and constitutional tendencies of nature have, perhaps, laid the foundation for these opposite mental positions. Differences of education have increased these original susceptibilities. One man has been trained to regard that as possible which another man has been brought up to conceive as utterly impossible. One man has been taught to weigh evidence carefully, while another man has been unaccustomed to discrimination. The social surroundings of the different jurymen have intensified those natural differences, which had been still further increased by education. In the society wherein one moves, the action charged upon the prisoner is well nigh inconceivable; while in the society wherein another moves, such action is regarded as the natural conduct of men, under the circumstances. Even the apparently trivial forces of the day and of the hour, the state of the weather, the condition of a man's health, and a host of minor features may enter in unconsciously to produce the result which he renders in his verdict.

All this is perfectly familiar to us in matters of every-day life, but we do not sufficiently remember that the same predisposing forces are at work in larger judgments. Look where we will, we find the action of such influences upon belief. Whole

classes are thus affected, and their beliefs largely determined by predispositions. Labor to-day stands in an attitude of utter distrust toward capital. It regards the friendliest proposition which comes from capital with an undisguised suspicion. The working man's mind is filled with ideas and his heart is soured with feelings which prejudge the case. Races show similar predispositions in their judgments. There has been an almost pathetic comicalness in the mutual misunderstandings of the French and of the English. They have looked at each other through the smoked glasses of national prejudice. Different ages are characterized by different predispositions. One age becomes naturally an age of faith; another becomes as naturally an age of doubt. To the one, the great spiritual realities carry their own conclusive evidence; to the other, those same realities appear vague and nebulous.

The striking alteration which has come over the religious belief of man in the Western world has not been wrought so much by direct argument as through a change of mental temperature. Geologists tell us that in past ages Europe has been at times in a glacial condition, and that it has been again at other times in a tropical climate. The slow changes which have been working toward these conditions have determined irresistibly the nature of the growths of Europe. The flora and fauna of England have changed, as England itself

has been tending toward an arctic or an equatorial climate. Whole orders of beautiful organisms have disappeared as the mean temperature has fallen a few degrees. Precisely so is it in the realm of mind. Beliefs which have flourished in a mental climate such as that of the middle ages, have quietly dried up, and withered away as the mean temperature of the imagination has fallen. A century and a half ago, everybody in New England believed in witchcraft. It was not merely a delusion of the ignorant classes—it was the firm conviction of the most intelligent and best educated classes. Learned judges laid down the law concerning it with as entire an assurance in its substantial reality as learned judges now have concerning the reality of murder or of theft. What has caused the abandonment of this belief? It has not been disproven—it has simply faded out of men's minds, as the mental climate has changed. Under the predispositions created in the human mind by the spread of modern ideas, it has seemed no longer believable. Superstition has thus been gradually dying out, under the action of insensible changes in the mean temperature of thought.

This change which has been going on in the mental disposition necessarily affects the true faiths of men in that which is beyond the ken of the senses, as well as their superstitions. Superstitions are the fungoid growths of the soul. They die

quickly under the keen air of reason. The same strong air of the latitudes of knowledge which proves fatal to superstition checks the free growth of faith, which had assumed tropical dimensions in the balmy eras of the imagination. The early influences of an age of reason must seem hostile to all belief. Just because faith is faith and not knowledge, it must appear to shrink and shrivel at the first touch of an age whose breath sweeps down upon us as from a frozen North. The less capable a proposition proves of severe and exact demonstration, the more importance do the unconscious predispositions assume in determining our judgments. The faiths of religion are not demonstrations. It is always open to man to take the other side of the question. Hence the peculiar necessity, in considering the evidences of faith, to allow not only for the 'personal equation' but for the 'age equation.' The evidence which satisfied our fathers may fail to satisfy us, and yet be in itself just as impressive and convincing as of old, were our minds in the same attitude toward belief as that in which our fathers stood. We can never rightly appraise the evidence for the faiths of our religion unless we discount properly the predispositions of our age.

It is unquestionable that Physical Science has created a predisposition against the faith in Immortality—as against all spiritual philosophy, all ideal-

ism whatsoever. It has done so, not with any professed or even conscious hostility, but, simply from the nature of the case. After having had little or no knowledge of the physical creation, an age has opened in which men have been led into astonishing revelations of the laws and forces which are working in matter. Under the splendors of this age of physical knowledge, the glories of the earlier ages of mental science have paled. We are all profoundly impressed with the demonstrations of the physicists. We are correspondingly unimpressed with the old-time demonstrations of the mental philosopher. The whole realm with which the mental philosopher deals takes on thus an air of unreality, as contrasted with the garish light of the realm in which the physicist moves. After having been proscribed and excommunicated, physical science is now free; and, conscious of its freedom, tends to become arrogant and domineering, and, in its assertions of its own truths, pushes somewhat rudely other and finer truths to the wall. It will scarcely allow standing-room for any other truths. It fascinates men with its own revelations—so overpowering, so beautiful, so self-evidencing. It is, unconsciously to most of us, pre-occupying our minds with the conception of the universe which it begets. It is shutting men's eyes to other and higher aspects of nature and humanity than those which are seen beneath the microscope and through

the telescope. It is causing men to distrust the existence of that which cannot be laid bare by the knife or resolved in the crucible. In the presence of the clear and convincing verification which it gives to its dogmas, the spiritual intuitions look ghostly and unreal. It is engendering a philosophy which dismisses the knowledge of anything but phenomena to the sphere of superstition. It is forming a new education which instils these preconceptions. It is creating a social atmosphere which omnipotently moulds public opinion.

Thus it is coming to pass that, without knowing it, we are all prepossessed against such a faith as that of Immortality. That faith is one which wholly transcends the sphere of physical knowledge ; which seems to set at defiance the testimony of the senses ; which submits itself to no verification of experiment ; which yields, as its evidence, the testimony of witnesses from within the soul, who can offer no positive proofs which science can appreciate, and whose affirmations we must accept or reject upon their own weight. Therefore, in an age of scales and measures, we question where our fathers serenely trusted. It is not claimed that anything has been discovered which disproves this faith, yet, somehow or other, it has come to pass that hosts of men feel suspicious where they were formerly confident.

I have pointed you, as I believe, to the real secret

of this change. The acknowledgment of the fact of the predispositions which have been introduced by physical science should point us to the correction of our over-suspiciousness. We are suffering from the first influences of a glorious age ; an age which is revealing truths unknown to our fathers, in whose blinding splendors we are losing sight, for awhile, of other and higher truths, which our fathers saw, and in which they walked peacefully toward the life beyond. The pendulum swing has gone too far—it will recoil, in the slow movement of humanity toward the mean of truth. The provincialism of the *zeit geist* will yet be taken up into the cosmopolitanism of the spirit of the ages—the Eternal Spirit who is guiding men into all truth. After we have well mastered the revelation of the reign of law, the old mystery will be recognized back of law, and men will see that behind all the marvels of matter there is the infinite wonder of mind. After the fungoid growths of the age of superstition have been killed off, in the keen air of the latitudes of reason, the old, deep, true faiths of man will live on, in nobler, finer forms ; as the pines of Switzerland become stronger and more stately on the heights of the upper Alps, where the rank undergrowth of the soft valleys finds no shelter beneath their stern shadows.

The highest authorities, in their highest moods, see this, and confess that the scepticism of our age

toward such a faith is but the limitation of a period. No one is more humble before the mystery of the Infinite Power of Nature, or more convinced that we have no warrant for dogmatizing upon the secrets of life than Herbert Spencer. If all his disciples were loyal to his spirit, they would stand in a constant attitude of expectant wonder; ready to receive ever fresh and more surprising revelations of the purpose of Nature. From one of the leading physicists of our own country, I had a letter lately, in which—after a recognition of the aim of this pulpit which more than counterbalanced the hard things then being said from within our own church—he declared: “What a glorious future extends to our view if, instead of bigotry and threats on the part of those it must be conceded often the least able to instruct, and sullen contempt on the part of the disciples of the inductive method, we could join hands and brains: the moral philosopher and metaphysician complementing by his methods of investigation the oftentimes too material conclusions of his brother in the field of science.” Only this week I have received, from an eminent Professor in the Sheffield School of Science of Yale, a copy of a lecture, in which, with great force and striking beauty, he elaborated the proposition that science itself rests upon faith, and that it trains its disciples in the sublimest powers of trust concerning truths which it can never hope to prove. A few years ago

a great sensation was made among the English-speaking peoples, by an anonymous book, which proved, later on, to have been written by two well-known and highly honored physicists of England; in which, by reasonings of the severest scientific character, the conclusion was reached that physical science itself leads men through the visible universe to an unseen universe, out of which the unseen creation came, and back into which it is to return; an unseen universe in which there is not only room enough left for the possibility of man's continuance of life after death, but from which there are, even now, to our thought, disclosed the hints of a preparation for such a transformation—a transformation that, as the authors pointed out, is almost rendered a necessary belief, from the fundamental law of Science, the Conservation of Energy.

And thus even our own age beholds glimpses of the dawning of a day in which physical science will correct its early and natural predispositions against this faith, by the attitude of awed expectancy which it will inspire in those who stand within an order wherein all knowledge proves to be but faith; an order in which, as men will have learned, "the things which are seen are temporal and the things which are unseen are eternal."

What then are the actual grounds which even seem to warrant the predisposition against Immor-

tality? They are summed in two theories which obtain more or less among men of science.

II.

The magnificent scientific generalization which is known as the theory of Evolution creates a predisposition against the faith in Immortality.

In the old thought of man's place in creation, he held a position of dignity which made it easy to regard him as the end and aim of Nature, and thus to believe that, as such, a special future was awaiting him. With the change which has been wrought in our thought of the order of the universe and the method of creation, man's place in Nature seems to have changed, and he appears to have lost his ancient royal dignity—a dignity as of the Son of the Highest. The traditional astronomy had placed the earth, practically, at the centre of the universe—a fit scene for the drama of human destiny. Copernicus relegated it to its true place, as a little blue-rimmed star, moving with its fellows round a central sun; which sun, with all its solar system, was in turn seen to be but one of the immense hosts of similar systems which sweep sublimely through the infinitudes of space, in the mazy motions of the heavens. When the capital of the Universe shrank into an obscure province of the Divine Empire, man no longer looked the royal

being he had seemed ; and he began to question whether he were, after all, the son of the King of Kings.

The traditional anthropology had placed man at the head of our earthly creation, as a being who stood apart from the lowlier creatures around him, and who had been called into existence by a special fiat of the Creative Will—the lord and master of life upon our globe. Darwin linked man with the animals below him, as the latest term in the series of ascending forms of life ; a creature separated only in degree from the brutes, and growing out of the animals, as the animals grew out of the vegetables. Man's place in Nature was thus found in the Catarrhine family of Apes. With this new genealogy man began to question again whether he could be what he had dreamed of being ; a creature made in the image of God, who, as the Son of the great King, was to enter upon His life, and become partaker of the divine nature. He felt himself shrinking into nothingness in the Universe which opened upon his vision ; in one little corner of which he crept upon his feet to survey the stupendous process of Evolution, of which he was but the highest form thus far reached.

The vision of Nature's Order which Evolution gives us does, undoubtedly, at first sight, make it seem only an expression of man's egotism when he rises upon his little Earth and affirms : " I believe

in the life everlasting." It has however been suspected that this impression is simply due to the weakness of our human minds, as we have felt ourselves, very naturally, overpowered by the immensity of the revelation which Science has given us. Now that we have had time to face this new vision calmly, and to think twice concerning it, we see nothing which need seriously trouble the ancient faith.

Evolution, itself, is now seen to replace man in his old position, as the end and aim of Nature. He is not only the latest term of Nature's processes—he is the last term in those processes. There is a line above him which separates him from all that went before him. He is not a new unit in the sum—he is the sum of the units which preceded him. He is a microcosm—a little world. The materials and forces of the life below him re-appear in him. He is the flower of Nature's life. His mind is the interpreter of the order out of which he rises. Nature has apparently existed to develop him. In reaching him she rounds her cycle of development. With him she opens the last chapter in her story of earth. Every line of Nature's progress converges toward man. Beyond him we can discern no higher form of life, save that which may issue from his own unfolding of the ideal man which he carries within him.

This conclusion is reached by the severest steps

of science itself. It is affirmed by one of the very first authorities in our country. Mr. John Fiske was asked to take part in a symposium upon Immortality, at the Concord School of Philosophy, last summer. He was asked as perhaps the ablest and most honored exponent of the Spencerian philosophy in our land. It was probably expected that he would put in a calm statement of the difficulties which Science has raised in the way of this belief. On the contrary, he made a most remarkable plea for the old faith, from the standpoint of the new knowledge. His essay, enlarged, is now in print, and ought to be read by every thoughtful person. Accepting fully the Darwinian Development Theory, he draws from it the conclusion that it replaces man in his old position as the crown of Nature's hierarchy of life, the secret of her travail, the end and aim of all her mighty processes upon our earth.

Let me state his position in his own language. "When Humanity began to be evolved, an entirely new chapter in the history of the universe was opened. * * * He sees that in the deadly struggle for existence which has raged throughout countless æons of time, the whole creation has been groaning and travailing together in order to bring forth that last consummate specimen of God's handiwork, the Human Soul. * * * Upon the Darwinian theory it is impossible that any creature zoologically distinct

from man and superior to him should ever at any future time exist upon the earth. * * * For when once the formidable theory is really understood, when once its implications are properly unfolded, it is seen to have no such consequences as were first ascribed to it. As with the Copernican astronomy, so with the Darwinian biology, we rise to a higher view of the workings of God and of the nature of Man than was ever attainable before. So far from degrading Humanity, or putting it on a level with the animal world in general, the Darwinian theory shows us distinctly for the first time how the creation and the perfecting of Man is the goal toward which Nature's work has all the while been tending. It enlarges tenfold the significance of human life, places it even upon a loftier eminence than poets and prophets have imagined, and makes it seem more than ever the chief object of that creative activity which is manifested in the universe. * * * From the Origin of Man, when thoroughly comprehended in its general outlines, we shall at length be able to catch some glimpses of his Destiny. * * * For my own part, therefore, I believe in the immortality of the soul, not in the sense in which I accept the demonstrable truths of Science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work." *

How surprising such a testimony must be to

* "Destiny of Man"; pp. 30, 32, 31, 24, 76, 116.

those who have been denouncing the fearless, honest searchers after truth, for their irreligiousness ! Mr. Fiske's argument, of course, does not prove Immortality, but it does effectually prove that there is no disproof of that faith in the development theory. It clears the ground for the vision of the soul, in the light of our new knowledge. Instead of a preternatural, arbitrary method of establishing Man's position, we have here a natural and necessary foundation for that position. The pedestal of miracle, on which man tottered while facing the skies, is rudely knocked away ; but only to disclose a pedestal of law, on which man stands firm as the inviolable order of Nature, looking up into the heavens. Thus " Wisdom is justified of all her children."

We may even push out this line of thought into the larger field of Evolution. If man holds the secret of Nature's processes of life here, is it not at least probable that he, or some similar being, holds her secret elsewhere ; that she is everywhere educating life up to the sphere of spirit, in which permanency is found, and in which death becomes but a new birth ? The unity of Nature assures us that the Sphinx was right when she whispered to our great seer :

" Who telleth one of my meanings,
Is master of all I am."

We know now that the most distant stars are built

up out of the same elements which constitute our earth; that the same laws control these identical elements in all worlds; and that the same forces energize them. It seems almost necessary to infer that the same types of structure shape life in the stars, scattered through space, as those that mould life on our earth—subject to the inevitable modifications of widely differing environments. At the head of all the rich and teeming life of the starry worlds, we are almost driven to see such a being as man—if not as he exists upon our earth then either potentially, in forms of life which have not as yet reached up to him, or in more highly developed forms of an idealized humanity, of which our earth presents but the rough draft. If minerals and earths are there as well as here, if mountains rise and seas beat on granite shores and clouds droop soft over fertile fields—is there no lord of life enjoying those scenes, as man enjoys our earth? If the same story repeats itself in different chapters, shall not the *finis* be the same; and the Divine Voice be heard by us, reverently saying: “Let us make man in our own image”? Man thus appears, in the light of Evolution, to be the end and aim of Nature—the birth of stars, as of the earth, a son of God.

Again I am not offering this statement as a mere private speculation, but as the deliberately formed, and carefully expressed conviction of prominent

physicists, in whose words I have found the conclusion which I had reached to my own satisfaction before reading their pages. The authors of "The Unseen Universe" declare: "We entertain no doubt that man and beings at least analogous to man represent the highest order of living things connected with the present visible universe. * * * From all this we may conclude that both Science and religion tell us the same tale. They inform us that man, and beings similar to man, are at the head of the visible universe" (pp. 191 and 194).

III.

Science seems to create a predisposition against the faith in Immortality, through its materialistic tendencies.

There can be no question that the trend of scientific thinking has been in the direction of a more or less pronounced materialism—as indeed was natural in the knowledge which has had for its field the realm of matter. The physicist could not avoid a physical conception of life. Materialism, accepted as the interpretation of the universe, would indeed rule out this faith from the thoughts of men. The mind which is merely a function of the brain would be only fooling itself with the dreams which it might cherish of a continuance of thought, after these grayish coils of tissue in our heads have crumbled to dust.

We have already considered materialism as a theory of life, and found it, I think, unsatisfactory. As Science pushes through the outer circles of the phenomena with which she first dealt, she is coming up, everywhere, to the infinite mystery that is at the heart of all things—the core and substance of all existence; and before this mystery she is correcting the natural errors of her early days. The deeper-thoughted savants indulge in no flippant materialistic talk. They see that which gives them pause, and which, if it prompts to no articulate speech, at least makes them reverently silent. The logical consequences of materialism are being anticipated, and they prove as unthinkable as the conclusions of the most thorough-going idealism. The speculations of pure physics already promise to land men in no less profound a quandary than that into which theology's conjectures have at times led him.

There has been no stronger statement made of the case of The New Thought versus The Old Faith than that presented in the book entitled "The Creed of Science." After a remorselessly calm presentation of the materialistic difficulties in the way of this faith, the author thus turns upon these objections: "According to your argument, all thought is bound up with the bodily machine or organism, and disappears with it, and if all organisms disappear, as Science teaches they will, then all mind would also vanish from the universe. Either this

must be, or mind can exist without the bodily machinery, which scientific materialism does not grant. And is this the scientific conclusion credible? Is it possible that mind—the thing so splendid in its higher manifestations, with its vision of beauty, its depths of tender affection, its godlike apprehension of truth, its divine enthusiasm for right—this subtle and wonderful essence, so slowly gathered and distilled through countless ages, as evolution teaches, should be thus recklessly spilt and lost again out of the universe? Is this wonderful and potent extract from matter, rising through life, through animal sensations, till, thrice sublimed, it became thought and spirit, which searches the secret of the universe, and through Philosophy and Science herself has partly found it—is this wonderful quintessence, the inmost nerve and life of Philosophy, of Art, as well as of Science herself, to be thus finally wasted? Is Nature so blind and stupid, as well as so foolishly wasteful of her gathered gains, as to throw away the grandest thing—the only really great thing she had reached, and to throw it away just when she had perfected it? The thing, moreover, to attain to which it seems that all her efforts were bent, and toward which all her labors in all directions finally converged? * * * Is it thinkable that all consciousness should perish, and that eternal night and nothingness should set in? That the universe should return once again to the cosmic vapor and the eter-

nal silence from which it first proceeded? * * * We might have become reconciled to the belief, however insufficient the evidence for it appears to be, that the earth, the sun, nay, even all the spheres of space, should die; we might have even accepted the extinction of our hopes of individual immortality; but when we find that the same argument which destroys all these and ourselves brings us in the end to a universe of death, we must conclude there is a vice in the reasoning which leads to a conclusion so desperate and absurd." *

As the logical issue of the materialistic objection to Immortality raises difficulties that are fully as great as those of the faith against which it protested, so does this objection prove intrinsically invalid when examined calmly by high authorities in Science. Prof. Fiske writes: "The last place in the world to which I should go for information about a state of things in which thought and feeling can exist in the absence of a cerebrum would be cerebral physiology!"† No one knows the mind of his great Master better than does this loyal disciple of Herbert Spencer, and he writes thus of Mr. Spencer's thought upon this question: "The greatest philosopher of modern times, the master and teacher of all who shall study the process of evolution for many a day to come, holds that the con-

* "The Creed of Science"; pp. 170 and 171.

† "Destiny of Man"; p. 109.

scious soul is not the product of a collocation of material particles, but is in the deepest sense a divine effluence. According to Mr. Spencer the divine energy which is manifested throughout the knowable universe is the same energy that wells up in us as consciousness." *

With these encouragements from the masters, it becomes comparatively easy to feel our own way up to the vision of the larger truth, in which the materialism which is so natural to all of us fails to becloud the hope of eternal life.

Matter is increasingly coming to appear as a mask of force. We are learning to conceive of it in terms of force. It is the 'vehicle of force.' It gives 'centres of force.' Force is the central and essential reality. Force is never lost—it but changes its form. That changing form may escape our cognizance. We know, none the less, that the metamorphosis is proceeding, though unseen by us. The energy which manifests itself in us is not resolvable, altogether, into those physical changes which take place beneath our eyes. There is a force in us which cannot turn into clod and flower, into worm and bird. Affection and aspiration, thought and conscience and will—these do not transmute into earths and minerals and gases. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust"—but also "spirit to spirit." These high forces pass

* "Destiny of Man"; p. 117.

not from us with the wisp of thin air in which the breath goes forth from our body. Some other and higher form remains for them, if the analogies of nature hold good.

Not far from us, to-day, the greatest soldier of our land suffers—while a nation watches by his side in sympathy. We knew him strong and brave in the days when he led huge armies to victory. We see him stronger and braver far in these terrible days through which he waits, heroically calm, the approach of the King of Terrors. Should the end come, and the message of sorrow go forth through the land—what could we reasonably say had happened? There could be no need for us to follow the story of the physical changes which death would work. We know that story, alas! too painfully well. But would those changes describe the transformation of forces which ensued at the touch of Death? Would the masterful powers which made him what he has been, have no other use in the economy of nature than the fertilization of the earth for richer wheat and ranker weeds? Would the generous heart, the loyal friendship, the clear judgment, the strong will, the high sense of duty, correlate into a little heat and electricity? Should we not be forced to think that the mind which had always maintained such a mystic relation to that body, which never could be identified with it, to unfold which all the forces of that organization had

strained, as the plant strains into the flower—that this mind had seeded down the being with the principle of continuance and had passed out from the body, as the seed falls off from the tree, to begin a new cycle of life?

It is conceivable that the force which is working in nature has thus reached in man an individuation which secures it from lapsing back into lower forms. The seed is dropped into the earth, the cycle of change begins, the plant's growth progresses, and, at last, out of the mystery of all these changing forms of the primal force, the old form returns again, and the seed in the fruit drops ripened to the earth again. The cycle of nature's progress rounds in man, who is the crown and consummation of its striving; in whose open consciousness the original Mind looks out and faces itself again.

Life always proceeds from life; that is, life is before the organization. Why then may it not be after the organization? In his own peculiar swelling phrase, the Boston Monday Lecturer declares: "I affirm that the microscope begins to have visions of man's immortality."* This seems to me to be confusing the boundaries of knowledge and of faith. It is not for Science to see the vision of a hereafter. Immortality does not come within the field of her lenses. It is hers alone to discover

* "Biology"; JOSEPH COOK; p. 90.

that there is nothing known which conflicts with that vision, to see that there is nothing visible which need becloud it. That vision itself is the sight of the soul. All we can ask of Science is to raise no challenging voice when the spirit affirms its sight of a hereafter.

There is within each of us a mystery of form which seems to point to the possibility, if not the probability, of life apart from this outer body. However we define this mystery, the fact confronts us that, while matter streams in and out of our organisms, it is held in an abiding identity of form. There is that in us which seizes these manifold materials and moulds them into a permanent image. That mystery of form does not inhere in the outer, fleshly organization—since it is changing all the time, and since it first grew upon the finer lines which were latent in the germ-cell. Within the outer organization there is the nervous system, the inner and finer form of the body—its counterpart in subtler outline, an etherealized body, the body of mind itself. We can reduce the fleshly organization to a minimum and yet, so far from weakening the mind, we may gain thereby a higher activity of all our mental powers. Men have wasted to a skeleton and have remained more intensely alive in mind. In our neighboring city of Brooklyn, two or three years ago, there was a girl who for years had been bedridden, and who had become so emaciated

that there was scarcely any body left ; of whose powers I heard directly, through a medical student who frequently saw her, the most astounding tales. She could read without her eyes better than most people can read with them. She could read books that were closed, and whose contents were unknown.

This is but a striking example of a class of facts whose characteristics are becoming familiar phenomena to our students of physiology. By whatever name you call these phenomena, it is indisputable that, in certain people, under certain conditions, all the ordinary powers of the physical senses are transcended in such an astonishing manner as almost to defy our thought and deny our belief. Ingenious theories are already suggested concerning these powers, by those who are studying them. Without waiting for the establishment of any theory, we may, nay we must, if we study the available data carefully, accept the sifted facts as facts ; and, so doing, we must concede the possibility of an almost direct action of mind upon mind, as though needing none of the known intermediary agencies of the physical senses ; the possibility of a complete transfusion of the physical nature with mind ; and the possibility of the existence of an inner and finer organization that may, more or less completely, charge the coarse outer organization with its higher powers, and that may, even now and

here, give us hints of a future disentangling of itself from the shell of the flesh.

Such facts lead us on insensibly into the realm of what is known as Spiritualism. It is too soon to dogmatize about the mysteries which Spiritualism involves. There can be no doubt that there is a vast amount of charlatanism in it. He who frankly admits this may claim the more consideration when he affirms his belief that this "ism" is not exhausted in such an explanation. Most scientific men have persistently slighted the subject, until its reiterated marvels fairly thrust themselves upon their attention. The era of scientific investigation of these wonders has scarcely opened. And already some men, well-known and highly honored in the walks of physical science, have confessed that their most patient and careful investigations have forced upon them the conclusion that there is a residuum of mystery in these phenomena, demanding further thought. Savants like Wallace and Crooks and Zollner, have testified to the most astonishing actions, as wrought in their presence, under conditions which seemed to preclude trickery or illusion. Such men have been driven to acknowledge that they see in these phenomena, at least, the action of latent powers in man which lie wholly beyond the ken of ordinary science.

Spiritualists leap to the conclusion that these mysterious actions are the manifestations of spirits,

other than those which are bodied in the flesh, in the rooms where the seance is held. This by no means follows, though this may be true. But, if such phenomena can be established as facts, it certainly follows that they demonstrate the possibility of a temporary superiority of man to the known laws of physics. It also follows that they point clearly to the probability of such an inner and finer organization as may even now assert its superiority to the conditions of the outer body. It follows, further, that they point unmistakably to the probability that death may simply liberate this inner structure, this body of the mind, and leave it free to be what St. Paul called 'a psychical body.' In the presence of such phenomena, if indeed they can be demonstrably established, it would be an impertinence to deny the life after death. The scientific investigation of these phenomena ought, before many years, to yield a reasonable judgment upon them ; until when, if we may not believe, we should not disbelieve.

If such marvels were the novelties of our day they would be effectually discredited thereby. In reality they are as old as history. In unscientific forms, they have been the cherished convictions of the mass of men. We have contemptuously labelled them 'superstitions,' and passed them by. Here, as elsewhere, beneath the gross, crude form of the popular fancy, our second-thought is learning

that there may have been a substance of truth. Far back of our Western-world story, among the spiritual natures of the East, the belief in such powers of man has been the established conviction of the profoundest and the best. You need only read any one of the books which let us into the secrets of the far East to perceive, centuries and millenniums ago, the anticipations of the marvels of our nineteenth-century Spiritualism.

Do not think that I have gone upon the anxious bench in some Spiritualistic camp-meeting. I have never attended a seance. I am not in any hurry to go to one. I am incorrigibly suspicious of back-door entrances into the other world. If I were convinced that spirits were communicating with men in these seances I should not be inclined to think overwell of the spirits. I should decidedly prefer to keep at a distance from them. Beautiful and comforting as is the belief in the possibility of holding communication with the spirits of those who have left our earth, the attempt to make such intercommunication our habitual experiences, to systematize and organize them and to establish business agencies for the facilitation of such intermundane commerce, seems to me fraught with danger, not only to this sweet faith itself, but to the mental and moral sanity of mankind. The history of this "ism" points us to the possibility that, granting the reality of such spiritual communications, those

who venture upon such mystic relationships may have to do with spirits other than those whom they seek. There are bad spirits as well as good spirits in the world beyond, as in our world. The experience of some who have come under this fascination, as known to me, is very suggestive of the spiritual dangers into which men may thus thrust themselves, to their bitter sorrow.

Such an attitude toward Spiritualism should render me free from suspicion in affirming that my very imperfect study, at a distance, of this fascinating problem, has convinced me of at least thus much—that the last word concerning man's nature is far from having been said by Physical Science. Whatever new forms of force may be revealed through such experiences, they will undoubtedly all rank themselves under the reign of Law. We have probably circumscribed the domain of Law unwarrantably, and in our ignorance have taken a provincial view of the Empire of Life, which enlarging knowledge and widening experience will duly correct; as in the days to come we open latent powers in man transcending all our present dreams; in whose light the vision of a hereafter shall be clear as now it cannot be to us. It seems to me a singular coincidence that this age, which is pushing physical inquiry in every direction, until we are all tempted to look upon life through the eye of the materialist alone, should be the age in which, as the

natural correction of this partial vision, man should come into a consciousness of such new and transcendent powers, through which he should see himself as a spirit regnant over matter.

I have before to day hinted the conviction which I would now declare explicitly, that, in these new and surprising manifestations of the power of the spirit which is in man, we find a strange light thrown upon the stories of Jesus that have heretofore been utterly baffling to us. Utterly baffling those stories seem still to us, except in so far as they now appear possibilities of the order of nature amid which we find ourselves; as we are enabled to see in them no merely preternatural marvels, defying our conception and transcending all known capacities of human nature, but rather manifestations of powers latent in man, which are illumined by facts coming within our ken. The traditions of the appearances and actions of Jesus after death are singular anticipations of much that comes to us, on well attested evidence, from scientific students of the phenomena of Spiritualism. His intermittent manifestations to the disciples—his being seen one moment while disappearing the next; his passing through doors and walls; his rising in the air above his disciples—these and other bewildering tales of the Gospels take on a strangely realistic air in the light of things which we have seen or of which we have heard to-day. Have you ever pondered that

curious word "Touch me not?" How much it sounds like an expression of the shrinking of the Spirit of Jesus, as it found itself new-born into the higher sphere, from the gross touch of one still in the flesh. The resurrection of Jesus means to me simply his appearance from the spirit-world after death. All else in the narratives is to my mind of secondary moment. Any attempt to conceive of a resuscitation of the fleshly body of the Master lands one in hopeless absurdities. The very contradictions of the story mercifully save us from such a literal reading of these traditions. The fact preserved by these conflicting traditions—as fact I believe it to have been—was that after death, from the spirit-sphere, Jesus manifested himself to his disciples; persuading them of his continued being, and inspiring in them that sublime faith in Immortality in which they went forth conquering and to conquer. Thus he "brought life and Immortality to light;" brought the glorious vision out of the darkness of men's dim and guessing thoughts, in that age of scepticism, into the fulness of persuasion, into the nearness of realization.

Let me record before you my own conviction that, after all which has been said in questioning this fact, it seems the alone interpretation of the tradition of the early Church, the alone solution of the rise of Christianity, with its fresh faith in Immortality. Under our new experience, the old his-

toric evidence of Immortality takes on a new reality; and all our human instincts and aspirations focus, as to-day, in the light of the story of the Supreme Man, through whom it pleased the Father to give His children the one attestation of the life beyond the grave which could carry conviction to the child as well as to the sage. It seems to me the natural crown of nature's processes that there should be a man born upon earth, whose mission would be to open the gateway of the grave, until the light could stream through upon those, His brothers, who sat in the valley of the shadow of death. He has come into the world, and, as he departed from our sight, the gates hung open after Him, and the glory of heaven flooded earth.

And thus, so far from disproving the ancient faith by their testimony, the materialistic studies of our day can be re-summoned on behalf of Religion, to witness for that faith; and from their hints we may re-gain the vision in which shall rise above our souls, with new assurance, the old belief of Easter Morning.

IV.

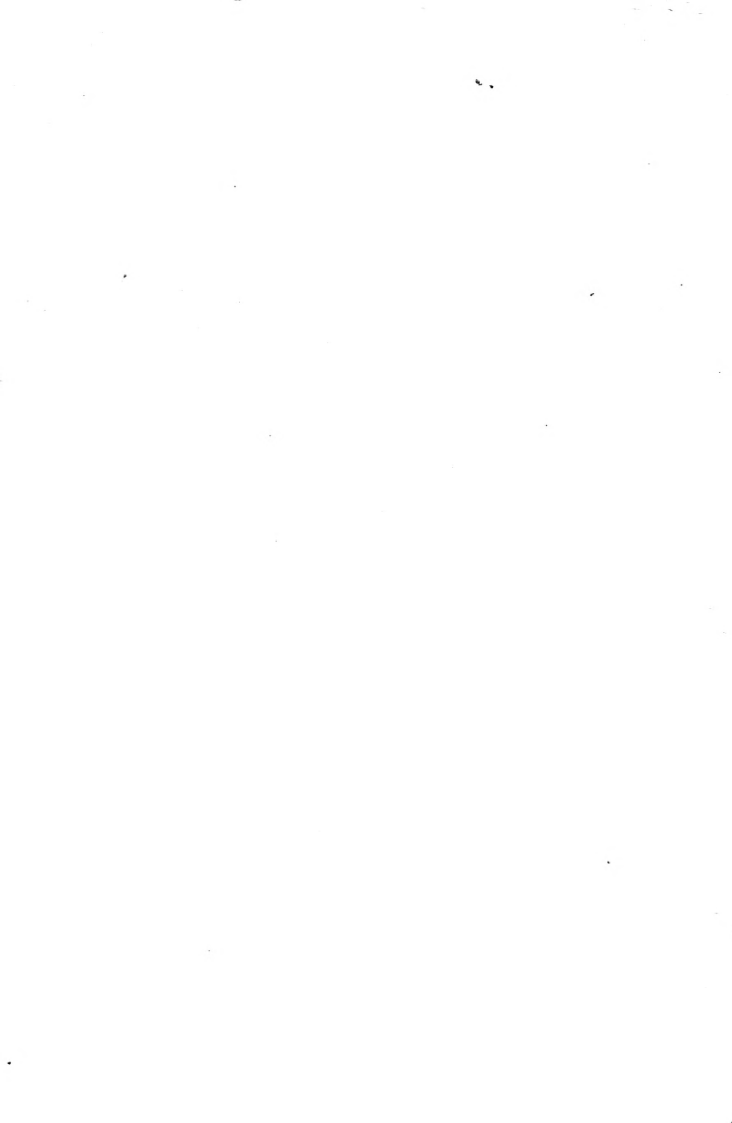
We have thus taken a bird's-eye-view of the bearings of Physical Science upon our hope and faith in Immortality. We have seen that it has tended to create the predisposition to unbelief,

which affects us all so powerfully to-day; but we have seen that this action is simply the limitation of our age, which may naturally correct itself in the days that are to come. We have seen that it appears to displace man from that proud position in which he seemed to be the end and aim of creation; but only to replace him in that same position, by natural processes, at the hand of law, and to throne him as of old the heir and king of Nature. We have seen that it has tended to a materialistic conception of life, in which the vision of a spirit in man has vanished; but we have seen also that this conception leads on, inevitably, to a vision of such transcendent physical powers in man as renders it easy to believe in a life after death.

Physical Science thus in no wise disproves our hope and faith; it does not even seriously becloud that hope and faith. It is clearing the ground for a new and natural and rational belief in Immortality. When its later words shall have been spoken, we shall find the chilled silence of our age breaking out into the music of the soul; the old faith singing itself freely forth in new strains from a worshipping humanity.

Let us then surrender ourselves to the joyous vision of Easter morning. With all our hearts we should trust this hope, this faith which rises within us; and live in its joy and peace. Let us lay away our dear dead, calmly; drying the tears that surge

so hot within, as we feel the warmth and light of the vision of the Father's House, in which there are many mansions ! Let us bear bravely our burdens and hold out strenuously against our temptations ; in the sight of the life for which the Father is training us upon the earth ! " O Death where is thy sting ? O grave where is thy victory ? * * * * Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."



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